

York Region to share in \$121 million in Federal money aimed at crime prevention



\$121 million of Federal money will be coming to police forces for crime prevention and enforcement programs across Ontario, including here in York Region.

The funding was announced by Dominic LeBlanc, Canada's Minister of Public Safety, at the York Regional Police's Aurora headquarters on January 31, as Ontario Premier Doug Ford, YRP Chief Jim MacSween, and a host of dignitaries from all levels of government looked on.

Over the last number of months, I have had many conversations with our partners in the Government of Ontario, with my colleagues in the Ontario Caucus, about public safety issues and particularly about the increasingly alarming issues around auto theft. Premier Ford and I speak often about these issues and how the Ontario Government and the Government of Canada can collaborate as effectively as possible in tackling crime issues that are understandably of great concern to the people of Ontario and also support the women and men who work in our law enforcement in doing the difficult and dangerous work that people depend on.

Both the Federal Government and the Province, he added, have been working to identify better solutions in working with industry leaders and law enforcement to combat the problem, which are alarming and worrisome.

It takes all of us working together our Police Forces, our frontline officers, our court system, our JPs (Justices of the Peace), community groups and all levels of government to keep our people and community safe, said Premier Ford. We each have a role to play. For our part, our government is making the necessary investments to ensure that our police services have the tools and the resources they need. We're getting more boots on the ground across the Province, we're expanding the number of recruits that can be trained every year at the Ontario Police College. We added 140 new spots in 2023 and we'll add an additional 420 spots at the end of this year. We're tackling auto theft head-on with \$51 million over three years to help Police identify and dismantle criminal networks behind auto theft rings because people shouldn't have to live in fear of their cars getting stolen in the middle of the night.

Today's announcement, this landmark deal between Canada and Ontario, is going to enhance our efforts to help tackle gun crime and gang violence in our community. The \$121 million investment over five years is going to provide more resources for our police forces. It is going to help disrupt the drug supply chains, stop illegal guns from entering our Province, curb the level of auto thefts and car jackings, and put more criminals and thugs behind bars where they belong.

Added Ontario Solicitor General Michael Kerzner: Because of our government's sincere dedication to public safety, efforts such as the Provincial Carjacking Joint Task force has been able to make 89 arrests, lay 554 charges and recover over 100 vehicles and we're only getting started. We have seen successes. There is going to be more that we will do, which is why the funding here today and the announcement here today is very much appreciated. I would like to reiterate that we are grateful for the support from the Federal government and we'll continue to allocate this funding into programs that help achieve our primary goal of keeping the people of Ontario safe.

Providing a local perspective on the impact this funding will have was Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Leah Taylor Roy who said she too had two cars stolen from her own driveway on Christmas Eve 2022.

“We as representatives here hear constantly about the challenges, the thefts happening in our communities and are deeply concerned about them,” she said. “Firsthand, I know what’s happening. Here in York Region and across Ontario, our Police Services do incredible work. Their challenge is real. It takes all of us, all levels of government, and all of us as residents to do what we can to assist our officers in combatting this crime.

“Our message here today is clear: we’re doubling down on our efforts to combat crime. We’re doubling down on our efforts, all of us together, and we know that we are going to stop this. We’re going to stop people feeling that they can join these criminal organizations, that the equation is they will have an easy win that they will get big money out of the hands of honest citizens and we need to make sure that message is heard. We’re all working together, we’re doubling down and we’re going to stop this.”

By Brock Weir
Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter