



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Official Statement from Mayor Ken Sim on the Government of British Columbia's Decision to Modify the Province's Decriminalization Policy**

VANCOUVER, BC – Vancouver Mayor Ken Sim released the following statement regarding the Government of British Columbia's recent decision to modify the Province's decriminalization policy:

"I commend Premier Eby's action to address the critical issue of public drug use while balancing the needs of our most vulnerable residents.

"Our vision for Vancouver is of a secure and safe city, where families can ride the Sky Train or play in our beautiful parks with the assurance that these public spaces remain free from drug-related activities. We also envision a city where those struggling with addiction receive the vital support they need for recovery and can find hope for a better future.

"Harm reduction and recovery efforts must continue to be prioritized as we tackle the drug crisis and toxic drug supply, which poses significant risks, particularly to our youth. The rise in fentanyl and other dangerous substances demands greater support and recovery programs from senior levels of government. By expanding these services, we can reduce the impact of the drug crisis and create safer pathways for those in need. This is why we are very supportive of the Province's investment into the Hope to Health clinic to expand their services in the Downtown East Side. We are also pleased to see Dr. Penny Ballem taking the lead on addressing the toxic drug crisis by expanding access to medical-assisted treatment.

"Today's changes will make public drug use effectively illegal and provide the VPD with actual tools to maintain public safety. This change aligns with the critical work we have already undertaken with the federal and provincial governments to address open drug use in public areas, especially around playgrounds, splash pads, beaches, and sports fields. These spaces should be free from drug-related activities, ensuring that families and children can enjoy them without exposure to harmful substances.

"While public safety and community well-being is our primary concern, we do not want to see the criminalization of addiction. The City of Vancouver continues to actively

invest in mental health resources and support services to help those struggling with addiction.

We appreciate the Province's continued collaboration with the City of Vancouver on these critical issues."

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