

October 23, 2006

Police now have the power to seize vehicles used to solicit prostitutes

Calgary... A new law that will allow police to seize a vehicle when the driver is charged with soliciting street prostitutes came into effect October 23.

When a person is charged, police may impound the vehicle until the matter is dealt with in court. If the person is convicted of the offence, the vehicle is forfeited to the government. Vehicles that are not returned to the registered owner will be auctioned off, with the money going into the province's general revenue. The registered owner can appeal the seizure to the Alberta Transportation Safety Board.

"Street prostitution destroys lives and neighbourhoods, and impacts the safety of residents," said Harvey Cenaiko, Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. "I am very pleased that police will have another option to deal with this problem. Community leaders in Edmonton and Calgary have been anxiously awaiting this news. We are sending a clear message to those who try to buy sex on the street that we will do whatever is necessary to keep our communities safe."

Under the legislation, offenders can have their vehicles returned if they can prove financial hardship, or if they are eligible for and agree to participate in an alternative measures program, which may include attending a program like "john's" school.

"The new law will give police an effective new tool to fight street prostitution by targeting the vehicles driven by johns," said Ty Lund, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "We thank the police and community leaders for their cooperation and patience as we finalized the processes and programs we needed to put in place before bringing it into force."

Bill 206, the Seizure of Vehicles in Prostitution Related Offences, is now part of the *Traffic Safety Act*. It was introduced in 2003 by Cenaiko, MLA, Calgary - Buffalo, now Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security. An amended version of the bill was passed in May 2005.

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