News Release

For Immediate Release

Minister Shewchuk addresses Senate Committee on Bill C-10

OTTAWA, Ontario (February 2, 2012) – Concerns over the effects Bill C-10, the *Safe Streets and Communities Act*, would have on Nunavut were addressed today in the Senate Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs.

The Honorable Daniel Shewchuk, Minister of Justice, addressed the Senate on the omnibus bill that would make changes to the *Criminal Code*, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act (YCJA),* and other Acts in a single bill. Some of the main effects of Bill C-10 are to restrict the use of conditional sentencing, enforce new mandatory minimum sentences, and toughen the *YCJA*.

“I was very pleased to accept the Senate’s invitation. We must work with our Federal colleagues to ensure that we have a criminal justice system that works for Nunavummiut,” said Minister Shewchuk. “Nunavut has a unique justice system and Bill C-10 will have repercussions on our territory. I was glad to share our unique northern perspective with the Senate Committee.”

Minister Shewchuk shared Nunavut’s concerns that new mandatory minimum sentences for adults and a toughening of the *YCJA* will result in a higher number and longer terms of incarceration for Nunavut adult and youth offenders. More inmates and longer jail time will result in higher costs for Nunavut courts, corrections and justice providers.

Nunavut’s unique justice system incorporates Inuit societal values and traditions, as well as community-based justice principles. The Minister stated that some Bill C-10 provisions may conflict with these values and principles. Mandatory minimum sentencing does not allow for community and elder involvement because the sentence is predetermined. The Minister stressed the importance of Inuit traditional justice and the aboriginal sentencing principles set out in *R v. Gladue,* which have been recognized by the Nunavut Court of Justice in its jurisprudence.

Minister Shewchuk agreed with the suggestion made by some Senators that an amendment to Bill C-10 assuring judicial direction when sentencing aboriginal offenders would address some of Nunavut’s concerns.

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The Minister concluded by requesting the Government of Canada help with funding to address Bill C-10 costs. The Minister also asked for a delay of putting mandatory minimum sentences and restriction on conditional sentences into action to allow the Government of Nunavut time to develop infrastructure and capacity necessary to accommodate the impacts of Bill C-10.

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