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Redford, Nenshi butt heads over Calgary Police budget

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Premier Alison Redford disagrees with Calgary City Council's decision to ask Calgary Police to scale back their budget.

Global Calgary

CALGARY – The city is facing more budget backlash, this time from Premier Alison Redford.

Redford says she does not agree with city council's decision to ask Calgary Police to scale back to balance the budget.

"I want to make sure that when we're spending money on policing, it's getting to policing," says Redford. "To see this sort of pull back is disappointing to me."

At least one city councillor is joining the chorus of criticism against his own council.

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"To me, it's one of the top priorities in our civic budget," says Ward 13 Councillor Diane Colley-Urquhart. "Everything else will have to take a secondary role."

Colley-Urquhart says it's not hard to see why Redford, a former justice minister, would be upset.

"Through her leadership we were able to get 200 extra police officers."

As it stands, police will not be adding any new officers next year and will close down three police district offices.

During budget talks this week, Mayor Naheed Nenshi says that's alright with him.

"The chief has been very clear the deployment model he's proposing was the right thing to do regardless of budget changes but the budget accelerated his program a bit and that's not a bad thing."

Nenshi has always maintained that police should not be exempt from budget cuts but the province argues that policing needs to be a priority.

"I want to send a clear signal that when we decide to set a priority on policing, it's not helpful to have a municipal government comes in because we've supplemented budgets to them pull back," says Redford. "It defeats what we're trying to accomplish."

Councillor Colley-Urquhart says she will ask council to fund 122 more officers over the next three years during final budget deliberations November 21st.

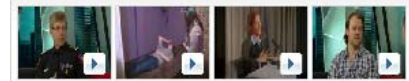
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