

April 6, 2018

Mark Hicken
Special Liquor Advisor for the Ministry of Attorney General
Ministry of Attorney General
PO Box 9292 Stn. Prov. Govt.
Victoria, B.C. V8W 9J8

Re: Submission to Liquor Industry Policy and Legislation Advisory Panel

Dear Mr. Hicken,

On behalf of the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM), I write to you today to provide feedback to the Province's Liquor Industry Policy and Legislation Advisory Panel. I appreciate the Province identifying UBCM as a stakeholder, and presenting this opportunity to provide input into the review of policy and legislation related to the B.C. liquor industry.

Liquor policy is one of UBCM's primary public safety issues. Consistent provincial engagement has been achieved through the Local Government Working Group on Liquor Policy (WGLP), a forum to discuss local government concerns and feedback, and to collaborate on the development of future liquor policy. In order to best inform this review, UBCM posed a number of questions to WGLP members, using responses to inform the attached submission.

UBCM's submission addresses a number of local issues, going beyond those directly related to the liquor industry. We would greatly appreciate an opportunity to discuss results of the review, as well as next steps, in greater detail. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, Bhar Sihota, UBCM Policy Analyst may be reached at (604) 270-8226 Ext. 114 or bsihota@ubcm.ca.

Kind Regards,



Wendy Booth
UBCM President

cc: *Suzanne Bell, Deputy General Manager of Licensing, Liquor Control and Licensing Branch, Ministry of Attorney General.*

UBCM Submission to Liquor Industry Policy and Legislation Advisory Panel

Introduction

To inform this submission, UBCM posed four questions to members of the Local Government Working Group on Liquor Policy (WGLP):

- Are there any provincial policy gaps related to the liquor industry that you feel need to be addressed?
- Are there other liquor-related policy gaps that you feel need to be addressed?
- As a local government stakeholder, are there measures the Province can take to improve its engagement with local governments (e.g. through the Local Government Working Group on Liquor Policy)?
- Do you have any other issues you would like UBCM to address in its submission?

Question 1: Gaps in Liquor Policy Related to the Liquor Industry

One identified gap was the lack of information on the Liquor Control and Licensing Branch (LCLB) website pertaining to different options (e.g. liquor primary licences, manufacturing licences, lounge endorsements, etc.) available to industry representatives. A recommended solution is to provide more detailed handout materials regarding the various options.

Question 2: Other Gaps in Provincial Liquor Policy

In light of the increased access to liquor resulting from the 2013 Liquor Policy Review and subsequent policy changes, it was suggested that there is a lack of corresponding changes/improvements to educational materials and Serving It Right training. With this in mind, it may be beneficial to conduct additional research into health impacts associated with alcohol consumption.

There was also concern over Section 39 of the *Liquor Control and Licensing Act*, which appears to permit the General Manager to amend or issue a liquor primary licence even if the local government recommends against issuing the licence. It was proposed that local governments be provided additional control and authority over licensing decisions that can impact a community (e.g. hours of service, liquor primary capacity).

Question 3: Measures to Improve Engagement with Local Governments

There was general satisfaction with the Working Group on Liquor Policy, and its role as a forum for policy discussion, local government feedback, and communication. To improve provincial engagement and communication with all local governments, it was suggested that a regular e-newsletter with frequently asked questions be developed. To help new local government staff members who are involved in liquor policy and licensing, some general information provided through regular emails/newsletters with specific process information would be beneficial. This type of communication may also help reduce the number of questions LCLB licensing staff receive on a regular basis.

Question 4: Other Issues

The only other concern identified by members of the WGLP was a perceived reduction in provincial information regarding liquor licence holders who are facing disciplinary action. This information, traditionally provided through letters from the LCLB, can be a factor when local government staff members evaluate changes to existing licences.

Relevant UBCM Policy

The following represents UBCM endorsed resolutions pertaining to the liquor industry, or recent resolutions (endorsed following the completion of the 2013 Liquor Policy Review) pertaining to liquor policy:

- 2010-B152: Requests that the Province ensure fairness and balance in regulating alcohol manufacturers, distributors and sellers (including distilleries, among others).
- 2014-B60: Requests that the provincial government increase funding for liquor licence inspections; alcohol addiction and treatment services; policing and enforcement for liquor-related offences; and, late night transit services as a means to reduce drinking and driving and disorderly conduct.
- 2017-B101: Requests an amendment to the Agricultural Land Reserve Use, Subdivision and Procedure Regulation to permit breweries, distilleries and meaderies to contract with other BC growers to meet the 50% farm product requirement on ALR land.

In addition to these resolutions, it should be noted that UBCM members have endorsed resolutions seeking a small percentage of liquor revenue (or the ability to levy a local government liquor tax) to support drug/alcohol awareness and prevention, and policing and bylaw enforcement.

Recommendations and Concluding Remarks

In addition to established UBCM policy, members of the Local Government Working Group on Liquor Policy have made the following recommendations for the Province's consideration:

- Create detailed handout materials pertaining to the various licences and permits available to members of the liquor industry;
- Improve liquor education and Serving It Right training by making necessary changes that reflect recent policy changes that have increased access to alcohol.
- Conduct additional research into health impacts associated with alcohol consumption.
- Provide local governments additional control and authority over licensing decisions that can impact a community (e.g. hours of service, liquor primary capacity).
- Develop an e-newsletter with frequently asked questions and process information to help local government staff members involved in liquor policy and licensing.

UBCM appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback towards this review. We look forward to addressing local government concerns through additional discussions with the Liquor Industry Policy and Legislation Advisory Panel, as well as through the Local Government Working Group on Liquor Policy.