



ALLIANCE OF BEVERAGE LICENSEES  
FOR A RESPONSIBLE LIQUOR INDUSTRY

FEBRUARY 13, 2024

City of Surrey  
13450 – 104 Avenue  
Surrey, BC  
V3T 1V8

[VIA EMAIL](#)

RE: City of Surrey 's Proposed Cannabis Retail Framework – Industry Engagement

Mayor Brenda Locke and Council,

I am the Executive Director of British Columbia's Alliance of Beverage Licensees (ABLE BC), a not-for-profit industry association that advocates for BC's private liquor and cannabis industries. On behalf of our legally licensed cannabis retail members, we commend and wholeheartedly support the City of Surrey for exploring opportunities to permit legal cannabis retail sales within your community.

As policy experts in the safe and responsible sale of regulated substances, ABLE BC advocates for smart cannabis policies that support diverse communities, contributes to local economies, and helps small businesses succeed. We work collaboratively with our government partners to ensure the success of legally licensed cannabis retailers, and to tackle the illicit supply of unregulated and untested cannabis.

As Council contemplates permitting legal cannabis retail sales within your community and its' appropriate municipal framework, we respectfully submit the following information for your consideration.

**1. Legal cannabis supports your local economy**

According the [2021 BC Cannabis Use Survey](#), legal cannabis retail contributes \$600 million CAD to BC's economy. As the stigma of cannabis use continues to decrease ([Health Canada Cannabis Survey 2022](#)) and Surrey being the second largest population in Metro Vancouver, the demand for cannabis in your community will continue to grow. It is our strong opinion that permitting licensed cannabis retailers to operate in within your borders will have a measurable positive impact on your community's local economy.

## **2. Licensed cannabis retailers are responsible members of your community**

Licensed retailers undergo extensive security screening and background checks by the provincial government to ensure licensees do not have a criminal record or links to organized crime. Similarly, all staff working at legally licensed cannabis stores must maintain a Selling It Right Certificate, which ensures staff are trained to sell cannabis safely and responsibly. This program is the cannabis equivalent to BC's Serving It Right certification, which is required for all liquor licensees and servers.

## **3. Legal cannabis is tested and safe**

Cannabis products sold from licensed retailers must comply with stringent federal regulations. In addition to strict rules around packaging, advertising, and age verification, legal cannabis is tested by federally licensed labs to ensure it is free from hazardous microbials, pesticides, aflatoxins, heavy metals, and other harmful contaminants.

Without access to legal cannabis retailers, we are concerned that the citizens of Surrey may shop at illicit sources operating within your community. Such illicit sources do not adhere to the same safety or age verification standards as legal stores and are often subject to enforcement action by the provincial government's [Community Safety Unit](#). As well, testing of illicit cannabis sold from unlicensed sources often reveals concerning contaminants, such as mold, pesticides, and other toxins.

In summary, ABLE BC strongly supports permitting licensed cannabis retailers to operate in the City of Surrey and we welcome the opportunity to engage further on the proposed municipal framework as BC's trusted industry association for private cannabis retailers and liquor industries.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [jeff@ablebc.ca](mailto:jeff@ablebc.ca) or 604-688-5560.

Sincerely,



Jeff Guignard  
Executive Director  
ABLE BC