



NOVEMBER 12, 2024

City of Maple Ridge  
11995 Haney Place  
Maple Ridge, BC  
V2X 6A9

[VIA EMAIL](#)

RE: Municipal Business Licensing Fees for Cannabis Retailers

Mayor Dan Ruimy and Council,

I am writing to you on behalf of British Columbia's Alliance of Beverage Licensees (ABLE BC), a non-profit industry association representing private liquor and cannabis businesses in BC. ABLE BC advocates for smart cannabis policies that support diverse communities, contribute to local economies, and help small businesses succeed. We work collaboratively with provincial and local government partners to ensure the success of licensed cannabis retailers.

I am writing to request that you consider reducing the business license fee (currently \$5,000 CAD) for legally licensed cannabis retailers in Maple Ridge.

As Council contemplates the licensing fee reduction, we respectfully submit the following for your consideration.

### **1. Current State: Local Stores are Small Businesses**

Maple Ridge currently has five private cannabis stores:

- Burb Cannabis
- Muse Cannabis
- Green Star Cannabis
- Cheeky's Cannabis Merchants
- Spiritleaf.

Each of these small businesses are active in your community, providing jobs for residents, and contributing to the economic growth of Maple Ridge's reputable retail, hospitality, and small business industry.

Unfortunately, these small businesses are grappling with the financial impacts of high taxes, inflation, and softening consumer demand due to the rising costs of living. These pressures are exacerbated by the burden of restrictive regulations, which make it overly difficult for BC's still-developing cannabis industry to succeed.

## **2. Comparisons with Other Business Licences and Other Communities**

When we compare the municipal business license fees to other businesses in Maple Ridge, we see a vast discrepancy in the costs. For example, in *Schedule A – Licence Fees of Maple Ridge Business Licensing and Regulation Bylaw* details cannabis retailers having to pay a flat rate of \$5,000 CAD, whereas for liquor retailers, pubs, and even big box stores are in lower tiers with lower fees.

Additionally, other communities in BC have also recognized the need to alleviate the high municipal fees that was previously placed on cannabis retailers:

- Vancouver reduced from \$13,500 CAD to \$5,000 CAD;
- Kamloops from \$5,000 CAD to \$196 CAD;
- Nelson from \$2,500 CAD to \$250 CAD;
- Kelowna from \$9,500 CAD to \$650 CAD;
- Prince George from \$1,500 CAD to \$350 CAD;
- And most recently Powell River reduced from \$2,000 CAD to \$200 CAD.

Cannabis retailers are facing the same financial challenges as other small retail businesses. Reducing cannabis retail business license fees to match those applied to liquor retailers is both reasonable and fair.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at [jeff@ablebc.ca](mailto:jeff@ablebc.ca) or 604-499-2566.

Sincerely,



Jeff Guignard  
Executive Director  
ABLE BC