



NOVEMBER 27, 2024

District of North Vancouver
355 West Queens Road
North Vancouver, BC
V7N 4N5

[VIA EMAIL](#)

RE: Municipal Business Licensing Fees for Legal Cannabis Retailers

Mayor Mike Little and Council,

I am writing on behalf of British Columbia's Alliance of Beverage Licensees (ABLE BC), a non-profit industry association representing nearly 1000 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 you consider reducing the business license fee (currently a flat fee of \$5,735.20 CAD) for legally licensed cannabis retailers in the District of North Vancouver.

As Council contemplates the reducing licensing fees, we respectfully submit the following for your consideration.

1. Current State: Your Local Small Businesses Are Struggling

The District of North Vancouver currently has four private cannabis stores:

- North Shore Cannabis
- Muse Cannabis
- Imagine Cannabis
- Goodfellas Cannabis Club

Each of these small businesses are active in your community, provide jobs for residents, and contribute to the economic growth of North Vancouver's reputable retail and hospitality small businesses.

Unfortunately, small cannabis businesses are currently facing serious financial challenges. High taxes, inflation, and softening consumer demand due to the rising costs of living are making it difficult for our members to make ends meet. These pressures are exacerbated by the burden of overly restrictive provincial and federal regulations, which make it overly difficult for BC's still-developing cannabis industry to succeed.

North Vancouver is also home to two taxpayer-funded government-controlled BC Cannabis Stores, who operate in in direct competition against your local small businesses. Together, these factors diminish private sector market share and reduce profit margins during a financially difficult time.

2. Comparisons with Other Business Licences and Other Communities

When we compare the municipal business license fees to other businesses in the District of North Vancouver, we see a vast discrepancy. For example, in *Schedule D Group 1 – Bylaw 6481 Fees and Charges Bylaw* details cannabis retailers pay a flat rate of \$5,735.20 CAD, whereas for liquor retailers, pubs, and even big box stores pay significant less.

Fortunately, local governments across BC have chosen to support BC's small cannabis retail businesses by significantly slashing overly burdensome licensing fees. For example:

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

Reducing licensing fees bring North Vancouver in line with competing jurisdictions. Similar moves have been supported publicly throughout BC and led to positive growth in local small business communities.

Additionally, we request your consideration to extend operating hours of legal cannabis retail until 11:00 PM, which aligns with the hours of sale permitted by the provincial licensing authority, the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch. This would align cannabis retail operating hours with liquor retailers in your and other communities.

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 or 604-499-2566.

Sincerely,



Jeff Guignard
Executive Director
ABLE BC