August 26, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Your Worship and Council:

REQUEST FOR SUPPORT FOR EXPANDED PATIO PERMISSIONS

On behalf of the BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association, the Alliance of Beverage Licensees, and the BC Craft Brewers Guild, we are writing to thank you for expanding outdoor dining in your municipality and to request that you consider:

1. Expediting applications for businesses to winterize patios in public and private spaces to provide operators with the opportunity to capitalize on the confidence of outdoor space
2. Approving temporary patios for Summer 2021 now so operators are able to plan ahead; and
3. Creating a program for designated pick up zones so that businesses can enhance contactless curbside pick up in the fall and winter months.

Outside dining has been a significant benefit to operators and customers. It has helped build confidence in dining out and activated streets in new ways that have helped keep patrons and employees safe amid this global pandemic. We hope that we can work with you to build on this positive messaging going forward.

The financial pressures felt by British Columbia's hospitality industry as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be substantial.

British Columbia's 14,000 restaurants and pubs employ over 190,000 people and contribute $13 billion dollars to the economy annually. Our craft beer and wine industries also play significant roles in the vibrancy, innovation, and economic impact of our industry and the province. At this point in the crisis, 15% of hospitality businesses have already closed. With the end of summer approaching combined with the end of temporary layoff and CERB as well as the extended closure of the border, the potential for additional businesses closing is significant.

The COVID-19 crisis has driven devastating declines in both sales and guest-count in the hospitality industry.

- 51% of British Columbians surveyed by Leger Marketing at the end of July felt that just leaving the house was stressful. 64% remain afraid of contacting the virus.

- Datassential survey of August 7 reports that the number of people concerned about eating out is rising: 47% are definitely avoiding eating out and 34% are nervous but will still eat out.

In face of real threats of business closures across the province, we ask you to consider extending your permissive licensing for restaurant, pub, bar, and brewery businesses around outdoor spaces. Extensions of the incredible support and creativity you have already offered would make a significant difference to the hospitality businesses that operate and employ people in your community:

- Extend approvals for short-term patios in public and private spaces to provide operators with the opportunity to capitalize on the confidence of outdoor space and expand the businesses ability to create physical distancing between tables.
- Support expedited applications for businesses to winterize temporary spaces, including by preapproving styles of canopies and heater units that meet your jurisdictions needs.
- Renew the extended patio program for 2021 now. This will ensure that operators plan to keep materials and generates cost savings.
- Create a program for businesses to apply for curbside pick up zones. We suggest that these include standardized signage that lists the businesses using the pick up stop and phone number for curbside pick up.
- Ensure coordinated communication and reduced red tape to make these changes possible.
- Support expanded permissions in discussions with the Provincial Government.
- Practice Sympathetic Administration and set new ways of doing streamlined business.

Our industry has never faced a crisis of this magnitude. It is our sincere hope that we can work with your council to find material and hard-hitting measures to ensure this industry survives. It will require bold and quick moves to help industry restore itself. We are working with the LCLB to extend their liquor service regulations in conjunction with this request.

Thank you in advance. We remain at your disposal to offer advice and perspective on these issues. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at any time.

Sincerely,

Ian Tostenson, President and CEO cell: 604.986.1429
British Columbia Restaurant and Foodservices Association

Jeff Guignard, Executive Director cell: 604-499-2566
Alliance of Beverage Licensees

Ken Beattie, Executive Director cell: 604.306.1500
BC Craft Brewers Guild