

Pamela Martin

Subject: FW: SG File No. 574866

From: "PSSG WEBFEEDBACK PSSG:EX" <PSSGWebFeedback@gov.bc.ca>
Date: Monday, August 31, 2020 at 11:40 AM
To: "Lisa Helps (Mayor)" <LHelps@victoria.ca>
Cc: John Horgan <Premier@gov.bc.ca>, Richard Elliott <RElliott@victoria.ca>, Colleen Mycroft <cmycroft@victoria.ca>
Subject: SG File No. 574866

Her Worship Mayor Lisa Helps
Mayor of the City of Victoria
Email: mayor@victoria.ca

Dear Mayor Helps:

Thank you for your letter of January 21, 2020, regarding the Victoria Cannabis Buyers Club (VCBC). First, please accept my apologies for the lengthy delay in my response. It recently came to my attention that due to an administrative error your incoming letter was inadvertently misfiled. As the Minister responsible for implementation of the legal non-medical cannabis framework in British Columbia, I am pleased to respond on behalf of the Province.

For clarification, the Province is responsible for regulating non-medical cannabis sales; Health Canada regulates medical cannabis, including access and sales. Storefront sales are not permitted under the federal medical cannabis regime. Under both provincial and federal criminal law, it is illegal to sell cannabis not produced by a Health Canada licensed producer. While I appreciate the intentions of your request for an exemption for the VCBC to continue its operations, the Province cannot authorize activities that are illegal under federal criminal law.

Under the federal regime, medical cannabis users can purchase products directly from Health Canada licensed producers. Some medical users may be able to access significant discounts on products through compassionate pricing programs offered by many licensed producers. Medical users are of course also welcome to buy cannabis through the provincial non-medical system.

Protecting health and safety is a shared priority of both the provincial and federal governments with the legalization of non-medical cannabis. That is why cannabis products from licensed producers are strictly regulated to ensure they are fit for human consumption including mandatory testing for the presence of solvent residues and contaminants such as pesticides, mould, bacteria, and heavy metals. Regulated cannabis products are also tested to confirm THC and CBD amounts.

That said, I have raised this issue with my federal ministerial counterpart and encouraged exploration of a licence that could allow VCBC to continue providing certain services. The Province has also urged the VCBC to contact Health Canada about licensing and informed them they may want to share their views about enabling medical users to access cannabis through a storefront. The City may also wish to share its support for the VCBC model with Health Canada at: cannabis@canada.ca.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety
and Solicitor General

pc: The Honourable John Horgan
Richard Elliot
Colleen Mycroft