



August 3, 2023

Hon. Lana Popham,
Minister of Tourism
Province of British Columbia
BC Legislature lana.popham.mla@leg.bc.ca

Dear Minister

I hope you are well and having a good summer.

Further to the BC Craft Farmers Co-Op's (BCCFC) ongoing mission to help the world's best craft cannabis farmers successfully transition to Canada's legal market, maintain BC's global brand and ensure consumers have legal access to the best quality cannabis, we are urging your government to produce a coordinated made-in BC cannabis tourism strategy with our members, Indigenous agencies and other sector partners.

At our April 2023 BC Cannabis Summit in Kelowna, attended by close to 500 delegates, the President of the Canadian Cannabis Tourism Alliance (CCTA), Dr. Susan Dupej, presented fresh research from the University of Guelph confirming opportunities to create many **new** revenue streams for BC cannabis businesses and cascade opportunities to other tourist attractions.

Dr. Dupej described how, if done properly, cannabis tourism can be a vehicle for Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and de-stigmatizing the industry in a way that celebrates entrepreneurs, innovation and wellness. BCCFC is a founding member of the CCTA. Thanks to their leadership, the federal government has identified cannabis tourism as an opportunity in their just-released tourism growth strategy.

With CCTA, other provinces are rapidly developing strategies to attract domestic and international cannabis tourists. If they are successful, our BC economy, craft and Indigenous farmers will be left behind. I attached Dr. Dupej's Summit presentation for immediate reference.

Also at the Summit, BC's Deputy Premier spoke about the opportunity in glowing terms:

As regards to the tourism sector, I think there is real potential, obviously farm gate sales as well, but it's also a case of not just farm gate by itself but in combination with all the other things that are here. I talk to people, they are excited about tying it into the wine industry for example or with other Indigenous and nature tourism. The opportunity to experience a wide-range of activities our province has to offer. We need to put in place smart regulation that reduce some of the barriers that make the industry viable, profitable like wine has done with vineyard tours.



We agree and hope the BC government will act on this opportunity.

In light of the universal support expressed by BC Cannabis Summit delegates for this opportunity and subsequent conversations with our expert members, we propose your department establish an inclusive BC Cannabis Tourism Partnership to develop a series of pilot-projects over the next year with sector leaders to create:

- temporary consumption licensing for host venues/events in partnership with 5-10 municipalities and Indigenous governments
- a high-profile international 4/20/2024 destination event and summit(s) – similar in scale to the wonderful annual Vancouver and BC Pride weekend celebrations
- a made-in-BC marketing campaign, with destination/tour examples and BC craft cannabis brand
- multi-lingual directory of facilities/destinations/rules in collaboration with regional tourism agencies and other sector associations
- introduce on-site sampling with BC farm gate policy

BCCFC received the discussion paper your government released this month regarding consumption. We will prepare a separate note after consulting our members. However, at first read, we continue to be disappointed by the slow pace of change and the ongoing stigmatization of cannabis consumption.

Similarly, BC's farm gate policy has not come close to meeting expectations. Thanks to an overabundance of red tape, unfairly-high licensing fees and ignoring expert advice, very very few licences have been issued in three years. As part of a co-ordinated made-in-BC cannabis tourism policy, BCCFC is hoping you can encourage your colleagues to:

- immediately reduce the financial barrier to entry by lowering the non-refundable Production Retail License application fee from \$7,500 to reflect farm gate license fees in other agricultural sectors
- eliminate duplicate security clearance process and fees
- apply special event rules for alcohol to license cannabis consumption spaces as soon as possible
- establish vendor permits to allow licensed cannabis producers to sell their products at local farmers' markets
- allow topicals to be used at spas and health/wellness facilities

These actions are broadly supported by other BC cannabis associations and we hope you will agree to assist us to create an economically viable BC craft cannabis sector.



Thank you again for your public service and attention to this issue. We know you understand this opportunity. We have copied this note to MLA Brittney Anderson who also attended the Summit. She has agreed to champion cannabis tourism with her recent mandate from the Premier.

We will reach out to MLA Anderson's office in the hopes she can help facilitate a meeting with you to review these opportunities as soon as possible. A proactive and well-resourced BC cannabis tourism strategy will send a message that decision makers are listening and acting in the best interests of BC's honest, hard-working BC craft cannabis farmers, processors and independent retailers.

Yours truly,

Tara Kirkpatrick, President
BC Craft Farmers Co-Op

cc. MLA Brittney Anderson
Premier of BC
Deputy Premier of BC
Leaders of Opposition Parties