

March 13, 2017

The Honourable Jane Philpott
Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

RE: Legalization of Marijuana

Dear Minister Philpott,

I write to you today regarding local government concerns related to the legalization of marijuana in Canada. BC local governments have adopted resolutions requesting direct involvement in the process to establish a regulatory approach to marijuana, and that marijuana taxation revenue be fairly distributed among all orders of government, including local governments. I would like to request a meeting at your convenience to discuss these issues, and other local government concerns that we may address through collaborative solutions.

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) represents 100% of the local governments in BC, and has advocated for policy and programs that support its membership's needs since 1905. Since the formation of the Task Force on Marijuana Legalization and Regulation, UBCM has been presented with limited opportunity to directly engage in meaningful discussion with the Task Force and federal government.

Potential costs related to marijuana legalization without any confirmed source of additional revenue could place a significant burden on local governments, who may bear substantial enforcement and oversight costs, and at this point only receive 8-10% of overall taxation revenue. Previous experience with medical marijuana has shown that, without federal funding, local governments face difficulties in enforcing federal laws, leading to the unregulated environment that exists today. As such, UBCM would greatly appreciate an opportunity to discuss the concerns of BC local governments as they pertain to marijuana legalization. Bhar Sihota, UBCM Policy Analyst, may be reached at (604) 270-8226 Ext. 114 or bsihota@ubcm.ca to arrange a meeting.

We look forward to collaborating with you in developing an effective regulatory framework for legal access to marijuana.

Sincerely,



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President, Union of BC Municipalities