



7th Floor, Frost Building South
7 Queen's Park Crescent
Toronto ON M7A 1Y7
Telephone: 416-325-0400
Facsimile: 416-325-0374

7^e étage, Édifice Frost Sud
7 Queen's Park Crescent
Toronto ON M7A 1Y7
Téléphone: 416-325-0400
Télécopieur: 416-325-0374

October 27, 2017

Dear Heads of Municipal Councils:

In April 2017, the federal government introduced legislation to legalize and regulate non-medical cannabis across Canada, and has firmly stated its intention to have the legislation in force by July 2018.

In response to the federal legalization of cannabis, the Government of Ontario announced, on September 8, 2017, a safe and sensible framework to govern the lawful use and retail distribution of non-medical cannabis as a carefully controlled substance within the province of Ontario.

As part of this framework, our government is proposing to retail cannabis through a government-operated Crown Corporation, as a subsidiary of the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO). This approach would meet the standards of control and social responsibility that Ontarians expect, while responding to consumer demand and displacing the illegal market.

Under the proposed approach, the retail and distribution system would include an online province-wide sales channel by July 2018 and up to 150 stand-alone stores by the end of 2020, starting with 40 by July 2018 and rising to 80 within the first year. This proposed retail system would sell cannabis and cannabis-related items only, not alcohol.

Our proposed approach is to build on the expertise and back-office capabilities of the LCBO to set up the Crown Corporation. Our priority is to reduce the illegal market by building on our strengths to create an efficient and secure system for people across the province.

Engagement with Ontario Municipalities

Our government acknowledges that municipalities are critical partners in provincial efforts to retail and distribute cannabis in communities across the province. We recognize that many municipalities have questions regarding the legal retail and distribution of cannabis and how municipalities will be involved going forward.

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Since the announcement on September 8th, staff from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of the Attorney General, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and other partner ministries have engaged with municipalities through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) on topics of interest to municipalities, including the retail model, enforcement and places of use. The input received to date has been valuable to informing the continued development of our approach and we look forward to ongoing discussions.

I would like to thank the municipalities that have engaged with our government to date, particularly those municipalities who participated on the conference call Minister Naqvi and I held with Mayors following the announcement, as well as, those municipalities participating on the AMO's Marijuana Task Force. I understand that there have already been several productive consultation sessions with AMO since our announcement.

I am writing you today to outline our government's approach to continuing to engage with municipalities on how retail stores may be located in advance of July 2018.

As we move forward with preparations to implement the proposed retail and distribution system, Ministry of Finance staff, together with the LCBO, will begin direct engagement with municipalities on how stores may be located for July 2018. We are proposing that the LCBO partner with impacted municipalities in advance of launch to ensure that input from municipalities can be provided directly to the LCBO and local community interests can be heard.

Identification of Municipalities for Initial Stores

To ensure Ontario's readiness for the federal government's deadline of July 2018, Ministry of Finance and the LCBO have begun identifying municipalities under consideration for initial stores. Municipalities will be identified in stages. This will support ongoing engagement with municipal staff in these affected municipalities and phase efforts to search for store sites.

Two primary considerations will be used to guide the identification of municipalities where stores will be located: first, to achieve geographic distribution of stores across the province; and second, to reduce the number of illegal stores, including dispensaries, currently operating in Ontario.

As municipalities are identified, letters from the Ministry of Finance will be sent to the municipal Clerk or CAO of each identified municipality. Ministry of Finance staff will also work to notify Heads of Councils in identified municipalities in advance of these letters and will work with these municipalities to continue an open dialogue to ensure that council's perspectives are considered. The letters will request meetings between municipal staff, Ministry of Finance staff and the LCBO to discuss the guidelines and a process for siting stores, how the LCBO will address local concerns, and municipal

interests in siting. This will serve as the beginning of the partnership between municipalities and LCBO. Municipalities selected for initial stores will also be transparently identified on a website maintained by the LCBO:

<http://www.lcbocannabisupdates.com/>. This website is expected to be launched today, October 27, 2017 and will be updated in coming weeks as the first group of letters are sent to the municipal Clerks/CAO's notifying them the LCBO intends to locate an initial store in their municipality. The LCBO will continue to update this website on a regular basis as additional municipalities are notified of the intention to locate stores in their municipality.

Guidelines and Process for Siting of Cannabis Retail Stores

Informed by consultations with AMO, proposed guidelines and a process for siting stores are being developed. The LCBO would utilize guidelines to identify specific store locations with the objectives of ensuring that youth are protected and addressing the illegal market. This includes ensuring stores are not located in close proximity to schools. Ministry of Finance staff and the LCBO are keen to meet with municipalities directly to discuss the proposed guidelines and ensure that local interests are being appropriately taken into account.

The LCBO would utilize a public notification process to inform the public that a specific store location has been identified in their community. As part of this process, the LCBO will provide information to the public that outlines the store's operations and how local impacts would be mitigated.

This notification process will also provide an opportunity for public questions and concerns on specific store sites to be submitted directly to the LCBO. More details of this process will be shared with municipal staff through the planned direct engagement.

Province-wide Online Sales Channel

Alongside the roll-out of stores, the LCBO will be implementing a province-wide online sales channel for cannabis beginning July 2018. As with retail stores, this online channel will be carefully controlled and include important social responsibility measures. It will also help meet the demand for legal cannabis access in all parts of the province.

As we establish a new legal retail system for cannabis, it is critical that we do so with the objectives of protecting our youth and addressing the illegal market. I look forward to ongoing dialogue with AMO and with municipalities as we take the next steps in implementing this important initiative.

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I welcome your support in ensuring an open and productive partnership with our government, the LCBO and your municipality as we continue to prepare for federal legalization of cannabis in July 2018.

Where municipal staff may require assistance, please contact:

Nicole Stewart
Executive Lead – Cannabis Retail Implementation Project
Ontario Ministry of Finance
Nicole.Stewart@ontario.ca
416-325-1593

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles Sousa', with a stylized, cursive script.

Charles Sousa
Minister

- c: Yasir Naqvi, Attorney General of Ontario
Bill Mauro, Minister of Municipal Affairs
Lynn Dollin, President, Association of Municipalities of Ontario
Penny Lipsett, Chair (Acting), LCBO
George Soleas, President and Chief Executive Officer, LCBO
Scott Thompson, Deputy Minister, Ontario Ministry of Finance
Municipal Clerks/CAOs