

April 7, 2021

John Horgan
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Adrian Dix
Minister of Health
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Dr. Bonnie Henry
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Ravi Kahlon
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Harwinder Sandhu
MLA for Vernon-Monashee
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Re: Casino closure

Premier Horgan, Minister Dix, Minister Kahlon, Dr. Henry, MLA. Sandhu

Casino employees live in our community. They coach sports, volunteer and care for their families. They are our neighbours, friends and loved ones. But since the beginning of the pandemic, they have not been able to work and that has put significant strain on finances and mental health.

Casinos also play a significant role in our community, not only as employers, but as a source of funds for local charities as well as municipal and provincial governments. In the case of the City of Vernon, \$2 million in casino revenue was anticipated in 2020 but, instead, there was a \$1.6 million shortfall. That's money not available for much-needed infrastructure upgrades and other projects.

We respectfully request that provincial authorities immediately work with the operators of casinos in B.C. to ensure measures are initiated that allow casinos to reopen while ensuring the health and safety of guests and staff.

It is interesting to note that B.C. is the only North American jurisdictions to not allow casinos to open and data indicates casinos have not been a source of community spread in other provinces.

Gateway, which owns Lake City Casino in Vernon, has re-opened multiple casinos with capacity restrictions, barriers and physical distancing in Ontario and Alberta and there has not been spread of Covid-19 in these facilities.

Just as grocery stores, bars, restaurants and other businesses have created a safe environment, we believe that casinos in B.C. can also provide such rigorous standards.

As previously stated, we ask that provincial authorities immediately initiate a process to reopen casinos and to get our neighbours back to work.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Krystin Kempton, President
Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

CC. Gateway Casinos
BCGEU
Shirley Bond, Interim Leader of the Official Opposition
Victor Cumming, City of Vernon Mayor
B.C. Economic Development Association
Okanagan-Shuswap Chambers of Commerce