

March 24, 2022

David Eby

Minister of Attorney General

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Lana Popham

Minister of Agriculture

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Harwinder Sandhu

MLA, Vernon-Monashee

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Re: Support for B.C.'s craft cider industry

Minister Eby, Minister Popham and MLA Sandhu

The Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce writes to you in regards to an opportunity that can support entrepreneurs, increase employment across the province and increase the use of B.C. agricultural products.

Specifically, we are concerned about a number of factors that have negatively impacted craft cider producers in B.C. These factors include:

- Craft cider is categorized as a refreshment and subject to a 73 per cent markup. In comparison, craft beer has a markup of 12 to 14 per cent;
- The refreshment category does not reflect the emerging craft nature of the cider industry in B.C. and is inconsistent with other craft products such as beer;
- The tax rate is cost prohibitive and stifles growth as it restricts financial resources that could be directed towards product development, staffing, facility enhancement and marketing.

We would recommend that your government initiate the following initiatives to allow the B.C. craft cider industry to flourish:

- Define B.C. craft cider as an alcoholic cider fermented with 100 per cent B.C. apples, pears or soft fruit, with no concentrates or artificial additives. It would require a minimum of 80 per cent juice content (no more than 20 per cent water or other fruit juice additions);
- Create a new markup rate for commercial B.C. craft cider similar to the craft beer markup structure, with adjusted volumes for craft cider;
- Expand the B.C. Liquor Store program for providing unlisted local beer products to include craft cider.

Not only would these policy changes serve as a catalyst for craft cider production, there would be a significant positive impact on B.C. agricultural producers who provide fruit, as well as equipment suppliers and the tourism sector as visitors to the Okanagan and other regions are looking for genuine experiences.

B.C.'s economy has been hit hard by the pandemic and there is a need for innovative and balanced policies that reinvigorate economic conditions in communities, large and small, across the province. We request that you take immediate action on behalf of British Columbians and we are willing to discuss this matter with you further.

Sincerely,



Robin Cardew, President
Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

B.C. Official Opposition
City of Vernon Mayor and Council
District of Coldstream Mayor and Council
Regional District of North Okanagan Board of Directors
Okanagan Indian Band Chief and Council
B.C. Economic Development Association

City of Vernon economic development department
Okanagan-Shuswap Chambers of Commerce
BC Chambers Executives Society
North Okanagan Cideries and Juicers
BC Fruit Growers Association