

The success of these pilot projects builds on evidence in other jurisdiction in the province that have shown the benefits of such a model. Prior to the pilot projects in the Lower Mainland, inter-municipal business licence agreements existed in: Victoria Capital Region, Cowichan Valley, North Okanagan, North-West Vancouver, Courtenay-Comox, and the Trail Region.

To date all of the MBL projects have been a resounding success and several local municipalities bordering the pilot projects have adopted the MBL model too, thereby increasing the existing boundaries within which businesses can operate under one licence. In the absence of a single provincial business licence, implementing regional programs could be a more streamlined and cost-effective way for municipal governments in all of BC to operate in the short-term, and pave the way for the eventual goal a one Province wide MBL.

Conclusion

The benefits to local governments, business, and residents of a MBL model have been supported by the feedback and financial success of the Okanagan-Similkameen, Fraser Valley, and other MBL programs already in place. Yet despite these clear benefits, we have failed to see other regions in the province introduce similar programs. This is unacceptable and increases costs for local governments and for businesses; ultimately resulting in higher costs for the taxpayers in the community.

The Chamber believes that the benefits of a MBL program have been demonstrated in the numerous pilot projects and early concerns of loss of revenue and autonomy have been negated. Therefore, even in the absence of support from local governments, the provincial government has a responsibility to act in the interests of business and residents and set a clear timeframe for regions to develop a MBL, with any failure to meet this timeframe resulting in the imposition of a MBL. The Chamber also believes that the introduction of regional MBL programs is only an interim step towards the original stated goal, which is a single, province wide licensing program for all business.

THE CHAMBER RECOMMENDS

That the Provincial Government:

1. proactively conduct data/revenue analysis's for municipalities in defined regions to assist with implementation and merging of existing Mobile Business License programs;
2. develop clear timeframes for defined regions to introduce Mobile Business Licence programs;
3. work with local municipal governments to standardize terminology and procedures used when implementing Mobile Business Licence Programs; and
4. recognize that Mobile Business Licence programs are an interim step and that the provincial government develop a plan, including timelines, for the introduction of a Single Provincial Business Licence program.