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Minister Sebert
Minister of Justice
PO Box 1320
Yellowknife, NT
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November 27, 2017

Re: Cannabis Legalization in the Northwest Territories

Dear Minister Sebert,

The Board of Directors for the Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce would like to provide comments on the GNWT's *Cannabis Legalization in the Northwest Territories: The Way Forward*¹ report.

Although we agree that the minimum age for the purchase, consumption and possession of cannabis should be set at 19 years and we agree that the NWT possession limit should match the federal possession limit at 30 grams – the proposed distribution and retail model is a flawed short-term strategy that undermines competition.

The report acknowledges that entrepreneurs are interested in the business opportunities related to cannabis, but using the Liquor Commission as the sole distributor and limiting the retail opportunities to already established liquor stores unfairly restricts who can pursue these opportunities. The report states that the proposed legislation won't prevent the future sale of cannabis in "cannabis only" stores and that the GNWT is open to exploring options for the future sales of cannabis, but if the GNWT intends to open the market up to entrepreneurs, they should have a firm timeline for doing so. "Maybe later" is not clear enough for business planning purposes.

We were also disappointed that consumption at retail outlets or in designated establishments will not be permitted. Regulated indoor spaces where adults can consume cannabis are common in other jurisdictions where recreational use is permitted, and can provide additional economic opportunities for our community. We recommend a system that gives individuals the option to consume cannabis at regulated, adults-only cafés.

1

<http://www.gov.nt.ca/sites/default/files/documents/Legalisation%20of%20Cannabis%20in%20the%20Northwest%20Territories%20-%20The%20Way%20Forward.pdf>



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We are confident that the GNWT, working together with entrepreneurs and local governments, can create a thriving and responsible craft cannabis sector that prioritizes health and safety throughout the Northwest Territories, but we urge the territorial government to ensure there is a level playing field for businesses.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if you'd like to discuss this further.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Renée Comeau", written over a horizontal line.

Renée Comeau, President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deneen Everett", written over a horizontal line.

Deneen Everett, Executive Director

