

February 10, 2025

David Eby
Premier of BC
Premier@gov.bc.ca

Harwinder Sandhu
MLA Vernon - Lumby
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Dear Premier Eby and MLA Sandhu,

On behalf of the Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce, I write to express our appreciation for the government's recent initiative to promote Canadian-made spirits by temporarily removing certain U.S. products from BC Liquor Store shelves. This action has provided a noticeable boost to local distilleries as consumers have increasingly turned to homegrown alternatives.

This situation has highlighted longstanding challenges that British Columbia's craft distilleries face in accessing government-controlled retail channels. Despite the quality and uniqueness of their products many local distilleries find it difficult to secure shelf space in BC Liquor Stores. This limited access hinders their growth and restricts consumer choice.

A significant barrier to this issue is the production cap currently imposed on craft distilleries. According to existing regulations, distilleries must produce no more than 50,000 liters of spirits per year and use 100% British Columbia agricultural inputs to qualify for the "craft" designation and receive full markup relief. Surpassing the threshold subjects producers to substantial markups thereby making expansion financially prohibitive.

While this production limit was initially established to support small-scale operations it now serves as a constraint for many distilleries trying to meet growing consumer demand. The cap discourages scalability and innovation, as distilleries are reluctant to expand production due to financial penalties associated with exceeding the limit.

In light of these challenges and in consideration of the recent positive response to local spirits, we urge the provincial government to consider the following actions:

1. **Facilitate Greater Access to BC Liquor Stores:** Implement policies that prioritize and promote the inclusion of British Columbia craft spirits in government liquor stores, thereby supporting local businesses and offering consumers a wider selection of homegrown products.
2. **Reevaluate the Production Cap:** Increase or eliminate the current 50,000-litre annual production cap to allow craft distilleries to scale their operations in response to market demand without facing prohibitive financial penalties.

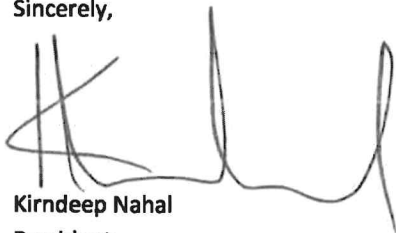
By adopting these measures, the government can foster a more equitable and supportive environment for British Columbia's craft distilleries, enabling them to thrive and contribute more significantly to the provincial economy.



We believe that with the right support, our local distilleries can continue to produce exceptional products that showcase the best of British Columbia's agricultural and entrepreneurial spirit.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss these recommendations further.

Sincerely,



Kirndeeep Nahal
President
Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

John Rustad, Leader of the Conservative Party of BC

City of Vernon Mayor and Council

District of Coldstream Mayor and Council

Okanagan-Shuswap Chambers of Commerce

