



## B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union

A component of NUPGE (CLC)

4320-01

CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

For Information:

☐ CAO ☐ Mayor/Council

RECEIVED: APR 20 2016

Referred:

☐ For Action ☐ For Response ☐ COTW

☐ For Report ☒ Council Agenda ☐ IC

April 14, 2016

Mayor Barbara Desjardins  
Township of Esquimalt  
1229 Esquimalt Road  
Esquimalt, BC V9A 3P1

*Also <sup>was</sup> sent individually  
addressed copies to  
Councilors).*

Dear Mayor Desjardins

As president of the B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU), I am writing to share my concerns about the sale of wine in grocery stores in your city. At a minimum, I urge you to implement a 1 kilometer distance rule bylaw for all alcohol beverage retailers as other municipalities, such as Kamloops, have done. This ensures there is no proliferation of liquor outlets. In addition, I urge you to consider implementing a six month moratorium on grocery store sales of wine. This will allow for thoughtful consideration of the following:

- Increasing the number and density of liquor retail locations could have unforeseen health and public safety consequences for our communities. The Centre for Addictions Research of BC has already identified 655 more alcohol-related hospitalizations and 31 more alcohol related deaths due to the provincial government's reform of B.C. liquor laws in 2014, which increased access to alcohol. With additional liquor access – in grocery stores – these numbers will only go up.
- Unlike private and government liquor stores, wine on grocery store shelves is not subject to the regulation requiring at least 1 km distance between alcohol retailers. This regulatory omission will lead to a proliferation of alcohol retailers in our communities, which has social implications as well as negative impacts on small businesses.
- Grocery store employees will not receive the same level of training as BC Liquor store employees. They will not be as knowledgeable on the rules and regulations around identification, nor as experienced in spotting false identification. As a result, it may be easier for minors to purchase alcohol at grocery stores than at BC Liquor stores.
- It will be easier for people to shoplift alcohol from grocery stores than from BC Liquor stores; BC Liquor stores are small, with attention paid to ensuring staff have good sightlines to all areas of the store. Grocery stores are larger with tall shelving that blocks sightlines.
- Proponents of wine in grocery stores haven't addressed the issue of staff who are minors. Allowing wine in grocery stores will mean that either minors will be stocking liquor and handling liquor sales, or, if they are restricted from handling alcohol, young people may lose access to grocery store jobs.
- Grocery store sales of alcohol will not always be limited to B.C. wine, cider and sake. The "B.C. only" model is likely to violate our international trade obligations and leave us vulnerable to a trade



challenge. The government of Ontario recently acknowledged this risk. A successful trade challenge would negatively impact our local B.C. wineries, thus impacting many important small, local businesses.

- A successful trade challenge could also lead to the sale of a full range of alcohol products on grocery store shelves, as once the limit to BC VQA wine is struck down, this could open the door to making all alcohol available in grocery stores.

The BCGEU's membership includes approximately 3,800 employees of the Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB), who work in communities throughout the province. Our members at the LDB take social responsibility very seriously – they understand the importance of keeping alcohol out of the hands of minors, and are trained to watch for appropriate I.D. and over-serving.

Our union cares about the communities in which our members live and work. We care about good family-supporting jobs for our members. We care about health, safety and keeping alcohol out of the hands of minors. We care about supporting small businesses and our B.C. wine industry. We strongly urge you to implement a six month moratorium on the expansion on grocery store sales of wine, to allow time to properly assess the potential social and economic ramifications of these sales. We also urge you to implement a 1 kilometer distance rule at the municipal level for all alcohol retailers to ensure there is no proliferation of liquor outlets in our communities.

If you would like further information, or would like to discuss further, please contact Campaigns Officer Earl Moloney at (604) 291-9611 or [earl.moloney@bcgeu.ca](mailto:earl.moloney@bcgeu.ca).

Thank you very much for your time and attention to this matter,

Stephanie Smith  
President  
BCGEU

cc: Kimberlee MacGregor, Vice President Component 5