
NEWS RELEASE

BC Chamber of commerce calls for restoration of the business vote, equitable police funding and open competition in liquor retail

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prince George, May 31 – Resolutions calling for the creation of the business vote, a level playing field for liquor retail in BC and equality in provincial police funding were passed by Chambers of Commerce from across the province who gathered at the BC Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting & Conference.

“Delegates have re-established support from BC’s business community for the creation of a business vote in municipal elections,” said John Winter, President and CEO of the BC Chamber of Commerce. “They have also called on the provincial government to allow private business to compete with the government on price in liquor retail, and for the creation of an equitable police funding program for all municipalities in this province.”

Businesses do not have a vote in municipal elections, and this has led to some municipalities levying an unfair property tax burden onto their business community. The introduction of a business vote would give businesses a voice in municipal elections, and allow them to make a greater contribution to the communities they prosper in. This is not a new issue, delegates continue to be concerned about government's lack of regard in this area.

The Government of British Columbia holds a monopoly on the distribution, warehousing and price of liquor sales in BC. Bars and restaurants must buy liquor at the full retail price, and private liquor stores at a 16% discount. The growth of the industry, and its ability to create jobs and contribute to the provincial economy, would see a significant increase if private sector outlets were allowed true price parity and competition

The current police funding system creates silos of policing inequity which is detrimental to all communities of British Columbia due to the geographically fluid and predatory and opportunistic nature of crime. Cost sharing to those communities using a municipal police force, like those which contract the services of the RCMP, would directly address the patchwork system that currently exists.

“These and other policies passed at our AGM & Conference demonstrate the strength of the BC Chamber grass-roots policy process, and its ability to reflect the issues which are impacting business communities across BC,” stated Winter.

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