



March 16, 2022

British Columbia Municipalities

Re: Reducing Patio Application Red Tape for BC's Hospitality Sector and Economic Recovery

As we emerge from the pandemic and begin the long road to economic recovery in all corners of British Columbia, we look forward to working collaboratively with municipalities to enable public and private patio programs that support our local small businesses.

With 80% of hospitality businesses still losing money and accumulating more debt each month combined with inflationary pressures where food prices increased by 5.7% last year and will increase another 5.3% in 2022, it will take two thirds of hospitality businesses one and half years to return to profitability. On top of that recent polling indicates that more than 60% of consumers are still hesitant to return to indoor dining due to COVID safety concerns. As a result, **continuing expanded outdoor dining on patios continues to be an important factor in helping the hospitality industry recover from the pandemic.**

Recently, we have witnessed the unintended consequences in municipalities such as City of Vancouver where new guidelines for its public patio program were not designed in consultation with small businesses and did not create the intended solutions supported by council. Instead, the program created additional fees, red tape, and duplication of effort for those restaurants, pubs, and breweries looking to keep their successful patio open this summer. Despite aiming to "streamline the review process" the additional hurdles created significant delays which required staff to rework the program within days of its release.

In order to avoid these unintended consequences, we encourage municipalities to consult directly with small businesses and our various associations. **Our key recommendations include:**

- 1. Extend current patio programs without implementing new restrictions or fees;**
- 2. Streamline approvals to ensure those small businesses who have been safety and successfully operating patios may continue to do so;**
3. Increase flexibility for patio types and sizes as well as the number of patios allowed;
4. Increase the space use of existing patios or picnic areas to allow chairs to be spread out to meet distancing requirements;
5. Allow pop-up outdoor dining and manufacture sampling spaces;
6. Allow and increase the use of parklets and public space for dining;
7. Allow any increase in patio, picnic area or outdoor space be considered a continuation of an establishment's existing approved alcohol service area or manufacture's sampling area to provide samples and not require additional endorsements or authorizations; and
8. Coordinate with any relevant bodies—such as the Liquor and Cannabis Regulation Branch, Fire Department, etc.—to reduce red tape and speed approval timelines wherever possible.

At a time when economic recovery and supporting our small businesses is a priority for all of us, we are confident that by working collaboratively we can reduce red tape and unnecessary fees associated with public and private patio programs.

Sincerely,



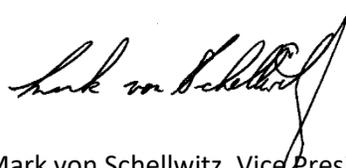
Ken Beattie, Executive Director
British Columbia Craft Brewers Guild



Ian Tostenson, President and CEO
BC Restaurant and Food Services Association



Jeff Guignard, Executive Director
Alliance of Beverage Licensees



Mark von Schellwitz, Vice President, Western Canada
Restaurants Canada