



Dear AKBLG delegates,

Thank you for attending our panel presentation entitled *Small business opportunities in the cannabis sector*, moderated by Andrea Wilkey, and presented by Tracey Harvey, Brett Pope, Andy Richards and Don McCormick. A link to our presentations can be downloaded from <https://ruralbclegalizationstudy.wordpress.com/documents/>

While our round table discussion and feedback process was cut-short, we still received feedback from eight tables and a variety of individuals who approached us following the presentation, on both the challenges and opportunities related to cannabis small business development in our region.

What we heard

We categorized feedback according to its relationship with local, provincial, or federal policy, as well as what seems most appropriately summarized as stigma and education.

Most of the barriers to small business development are federally related, due to the slow, arduous and ridged producer and processing licensing process, characterized by high start up costs which suggests large players are at an advantage, lending to market consolidation, and leaving the small participant behind.

Provincially, several delegates noted the slow approval process even after local jurisdictions supported applications, and a lack of clarity on rules and future product prices making business development risky and uncertain for small enterprises.

And finally, several local elected officials suggested a transition plan for pre-legalization entrepreneurs would be helpful to grow this sector. While some comments suggest the 95-year prohibition and resulting lack of access to accurate information is hampering efforts to develop a licit sector locally, despite a historic prevalence in this region.

Solutions and next steps

Addressing the federal licensing challenges, the emerging B.C. Small Producers and Processors Co-op facilitated advocacy groups across the Kootenays, B.C and Canada to produce a joint statement calling the Federal Government to do a reset of craft cannabis policies and regulations. Read more about it: <https://www.bscpp.com/media-releases>. These groups suggest a revisit of micro- or craft- license policies is required to enable small participants an opportunity within this nascent legal industry.

Additionally, to support high prohibitive start-up costs, some people have suggested the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT), with their strong community development funding initiatives could play a role in supporting development of this industry by funding collaborative projects like community-based resources or facilities. However, the CBT has indicated they are currently not supporting the development of the cannabis sector to-date.

Please contact us

If you would like to pursue business development ideas, or work together to tackle this transition strategically, please feel free to reach out to us:

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