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July 11, 2017

His Worship Fred Eisenberger  
Mayor  
City of Hamilton  
2nd floor 71 Main Street West  
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

<b>OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK</b>	
AUG 03 2017	
REF'D TO	<u>Council Aug 18/17</u>
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ACTION _____	
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Dear Mayor Eisenberger:

I am writing in response to your letter dated December 21, 2016, which was forwarded to the Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister of Health, by the Office of the Prime Minister, concerning the City of Hamilton Board of Health Report, "Public Health Approach to Revising the Legal Framework for Cannabis (Marijuana)." I have been asked to respond to you directly. My apologies for the delay in responding.

The current approach to cannabis has not worked. Cannabis use is widespread, particularly among young Canadians (including 21% of youth aged 15-19, and 30% of young adults aged 20-24). In addition, there exists a vast illegal market for cannabis, which presents significant health and safety risks. To address this, the Government of Canada is proposing a public health approach to cannabis legalization and regulation. The Government introduced legislation on April 13, 2017, to legalize, strictly regulate and restrict access to cannabis. This legislation was informed by the Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation's extensive consultations with experts in health, law enforcement and many other fields. I can confirm that the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's Cannabis Policy Framework was among the documents considered by the Task Force in its analysis.

The Government's aim is to minimize the harms associated with cannabis use, and the proposed Act focuses on protecting the health of Canadians, particularly youth. The risks of cannabis are higher for youth than for adults — and these risks increase the younger people are when they start using it, and the more often they use it.

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The proposed Cannabis Act includes provisions to restrict youth access to cannabis, penalize individuals who sell or give it to them, and restrict advertising and promotion of cannabis. The government's objective is to delay the age of initiation to cannabis and reduce the frequency of use, through both this legislation and early and sustained public education and awareness.

The proposed Cannabis Act would also create a legal framework for controlling the production, distribution, sale and possession of cannabis in Canada. This new approach will be a shared responsibility between the federal, provincial and territorial governments. I encourage you to share your perspectives with the Government of Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.


As we work towards the legalization and regulation of cannabis, the views of municipalities are very important. As part of the government's ongoing outreach efforts, federal officials have been engaged in discussions with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities as well as representatives of municipalities and their associations. On May 11, 2017, I was pleased to attend the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario 2017 Municipal Licensing and Law Enforcement Forum, which included a stimulating discussion of implications of cannabis regulation for municipalities.

Legalizing, strictly regulating and restricting access to cannabis is a serious, complex matter, and we are committed to a thoughtful, transparent, and evidence-informed approach. I thank you again for the City of Hamilton's thoughtful contribution to this discussion.

Do not hesitate to reach out to me directly should you wish to discuss this issue.

Regards,



 Eric Costen  
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