

Minister of Public Safety and  
Emergency Preparedness



Ministre de la Sécurité publique  
et de la Protection civile

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0P8

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DEC 14 2017

His Worship Fred Eisenberger  
Mayor of the City of Hamilton  
71 Main Street West, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 4Y5

Dear Mayor Eisenberger:

Thank you for your correspondence of October 2, 2017 calling for the swift passage of federal government legislation to legalize and regulate cannabis. I regret the delay in responding.

First, as stipulated in my mandate letter, as Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, I will support the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Health on efforts that will lead to the legalization and regulation of cannabis.

The transition will take some time and must be accomplished in an orderly manner. Until new legislation comes into force, the current laws and rules remain in place.

On June 30, 2016, our government launched the Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation, chaired by the Honourable Anne McLellan and vice-chaired by Dr. Mark Ware, to provide expert advice on how the legalization process should take place. On December 13, 2016, the Task Force released its final report, "*A Framework for the Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis in Canada*", which included 85 recommendations including those related to: minimizing harms; establishing a safe and responsible supply chain; and enforcing public safety protections. These recommendations will continue to guide our government throughout the legislative and regulatory processes for the proposed *Cannabis Act*. In this regard, our government is committed to working closely with all communities and municipalities across Canada before the proposed legislation is put in place.

You may be aware that on April 13, 2017, Bill C-45, *An Act respecting cannabis and to amend the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, the*

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*Criminal Code and other Acts (the Cannabis Act)* was introduced in Parliament. The introduction of this Bill is an important step in fulfilling the Government of Canada's commitment to better protect public health and safety across all jurisdictions by legalizing, strictly regulating, and restricting access to cannabis.

This proposed legislation would create a strict framework to control and regulate the production and sale of cannabis in Canada, with the objectives of keeping profits from criminals and organized crime. It would also provide for criminal offences and penalties, exemptions to permit adult possession, restrictions and new offences to better protect youth, product safety and quality standards and requirements, and compliance and enforcement measures.

Regarding your specific concerns about illegal cannabis stores (dispensaries), the Government of Canada has publicly indicated that these operations are illegally supplied, and provide products that are unregulated, untested, and that may be unsafe for the public to consume. Consequently, law enforcement will continue to dismantle illegal stores based on local operational priorities. As proposed, provincial, territorial and municipal governments will play a critical role in the successful implementation of the legal framework, including creating the conditions for distribution and retail sale, the enforcement of laws, local zoning and by-laws, school-based education and counselling, and access to addiction and counselling support. Jurisdictions may also enact increased requirements for authorized cannabis products beyond those defined in the Bill.

Many of the issues you outline in your correspondence fall under the purview of Health Canada and Justice Canada. As such, I have taken the liberty of forwarding my response to my colleagues, the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor and the Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould.

Thank you for taking the time to write on this important issue.

Sincerely,



The Honourable Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould, P.C., Q.C., M.P.  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Health