

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Federal Cannabis Online Petition**From:** Debbie France**Sent:** October 27, 2020 4:10 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca; Office of the Mayor <mayor@hamilton.ca>; Wilson, Maureen <Maureen.Wilson@hamilton.ca>; Farr, Jason <Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca>; Nann, Nrinder <Nrinder.Nann@hamilton.ca>; Merulla, Sam <Sam.Merulla@hamilton.ca>; Collins, Chad <Chad.Collins@hamilton.ca>; Jackson, Tom <Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca>; Ward 8 Office <ward8@hamilton.ca>; Clark, Brad <Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca>; Pearson, Maria <Maria.Pearson@hamilton.ca>; VanderBeek, Arlene <Arlene.VanderBeek@hamilton.ca>; Whitehead, Terry <Terry.Whitehead@hamilton.ca>; Partridge, Judi <Judi.Partridge@hamilton.ca>; Johnson, Brenda <Brenda.Johnson@hamilton.ca>; Pauls, Esther <Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca>; Ferguson, Lloyd <Lloyd.Ferguson@hamilton.ca>

Subject: Re: Federal Cannabis Online Petition

Hello City of Hamilton Council,

As a follow up to my Stop Illicit Cannabis Grow Operations email, please be advised that my MP, the Honourable Diane Finley for Haldimand-Norfolk has initiated a Canada Wide Online Cannabis Petition.

Act now to protect your communities before it's too late. This is a way for concerned Canadians to keep pressure on the Federal Government. Share this important information about this online petition with your community, coworkers, friends and family.

Why?

- OPP confirm Health Canada's medical pot permit loophole is fuelling illegal grow-ops.

[Health Canada's medical pot permit loophole fuelling illegal grow-ops, say OPP | CBC News](#)

The ask....

- Encourage your residents to voice their concerns by signing the Federal Online petition discussed below.

Be assured that Diane will address all cannabis concerns.

Clicking the link in the media release below takes you right to the petition.

Thanks kindly
Debbie France

MP Diane Finley Urges Community to Participate in Petition to Address Cannabis Growing Loopholes**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****October 22, 2020**

Simcoe, ON – “For years now, Liberal Health Ministers have been unwilling to address the serious issues within the legal regime governing medical marijuana growing, particularly what’s referred to as the designated grower component of the regulations.” said Haldimand-Norfolk Member of Parliament Diane Finley.

On October 22, 2020 petition e-2920 was launched to give Canadians an opportunity to call on the Government of Canada to take action on this growing problem.

“The designated grower program is rife with abuse, lacks sufficient oversight from Health Canada, and has loopholes that allow operations to grow to the size of large-scale commercial operations, with none of the oversights or controls that would prevent odours and environmental impacts on our communities. Law enforcement is also aware of a growing number of designated grower facilities that are linked to organized crime,” stated Finley.

The petition will remain open until January 20, 2021. Those wishing to participate in the petition can visit dianefinley.ca/cannabis, to add their name in support.

“I encourage as many people as possible to visit the petition website and show your support and send a message to the government. The people of Haldimand-Norfolk, and communities right across the country, have been dealing with the consequences of this poorly crafted program. Loopholes need to be closed, and our local officials and law enforcement need the tools to investigate and prosecute unlawful operations and to safeguard against the impact that unlawful growers are having on Canadians’ health and quality of life,” concluded Finley.

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Contacts

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On Sep 9, 2020, at 9:04 AM, Debbie France wrote:

Stop Illicit Cannabis Grow Ops

This email is being sent to all municipalities in Ontario who are being unjustly impacted by the outbreak in cannabis grow operations that choose not to follow municipal bylaws and regulations.

These grow operations are surging throughout Ontario exposing residents to personal safety and health risks.

THE ASK...We are requesting municipalities to join together and place this at the top of our Provincial and Federal Governments "must urgently fix" list. All levels of government need to be involved in developing a standardized and enforceable solution.

What has caused the problem?

Loopholes in cannabis legislation

Loophole after loophole in cannabis legislation continues to be exploited. The legalization of cannabis was meant to keep cannabis from our youth and to get it off the black market. According to law enforcement, legislation has had the opposite effect. It has allowed organized crime to gain an even stronger foothold.

Why work together with other municipalities?

Residents are suffering from the unintended consequences of some of the components of cannabis legislation.

- According to police, there is a threat to community safety. Guns have been seized at raids. Profits have been known to fund other crimes such as methamphetamine labs and cannabis can be used as currency to trade for cocaine and guns coming from United States. Organized crime has found a way to be comfortably sheltered within existing cannabis laws.
- Obnoxious skunk-like odours are adversely impacting the health and well being of residents.
- Risks to drinking water supply and contamination.
- Light and noise pollution.
- Greenhouses and other facilities that could be used for more legitimate job creating purposes are often being used for illicit cannabis production.
- Residents are afraid to voice their concerns in public as they fear the criminal element.
- Many cannabis operations are operating without the required municipal permits, required set-backs and in areas not municipally zoned for cannabis operations.
- A standardized and enforceable solution will significantly reduce many of the costs municipalities are currently facing.

Over the last few weeks, I have fielded phone calls and emails from residents of Norfolk County and across the province who live in municipalities attempting to control the outbreak. The municipalities all appear to be going to great lengths to help their impacted residents but the common response from everyone is that there isn't an immediate enforceable solution.

In developing a solution, it is important to consider the contributing factors to this problem

- It appears as though many cannabis producers are boldly going forward with their operation without regard for municipal regulations believing they can potentially hide behind the Ministry of Agriculture, Right to Farm legislation that was established to protect farmers who feed our country.
- Far too often, cannabis operations disregard compliance to local bylaws and zoning regulations. Court cases often take years.
- Many cannabis operations are difficult to monitor and are improperly regulated.
- There doesn't seem to be a cannabis tracking system in place for the vast majority of these operations. Where is the cannabis going?
- The secluded locations of these growers make it challenging for enforcement.
- Police raids have revealed that many of these operations are growing beyond their allowable plant limits.
- When the national cannabis prescription average is 2 grams per day as of March 2020 one has to question why the College of Physicians and Surgeons are not questioning or investigating prescriptions as high as 100-150 grams per day.

The purpose of the Cannabis Act was to displace the illicit market but it has actually given it a banner to flourish under a legal license.

Unfortunately, our government put us in this position. It's long overdue for our Ministers of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Health, Agriculture and Justice to place the personal safety and health of residents first.

What should a solution involve?

- Change in Federal and Provincial legislation and/or regulation is required to eliminate the loopholes that the criminal element has taken advantage of.
- Delegation of inspection authority to local municipalities would allow for fire, health and building inspections. Law enforcement would continue to have authority of plant count and the validity of operational authenticity.

There is strength and leverage in numbers. Join together with other municipalities and demand an enforceable solution from our Ministers.

Thanks kindly,
Debbie France