

Cannabis Legalization and Regulation in Alberta

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Overview

- Background
- Alberta's Response
- Role of Municipalities
- Going Forward – Next Steps

Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis: Background

- The federal government intends to introduce legislation to legalize cannabis in the spring of 2017.
- The principal policy objectives driving the federal legalization of cannabis include:
 - minimizing harms of use;
 - establishing a safe and responsible production system;
 - designing an appropriate distribution system;
 - enforcing public safety and protection; and
 - accessing marijuana for medical purposes.

Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis: Alberta's Response

- Alberta Justice and Solicitor General and Alberta Health convened a cross-ministerial committee in July 2016 to develop a provincial response to the forthcoming federal legalization and regulation.
 - Legal & Regulatory, Tax & Revenue, Health, and Communications sub-committees have been developed.
- Public consultations will occur to inform the development and implementation of a framework for cannabis that aligns with the federal government initiative.
- Targeted consultations will be held with key stakeholders on specific relevant issues.

Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis: Alberta's Response

- A dedicated provincial Task Force is being established to respond to the policy and regulatory work Alberta will need to undertake.
 - Composition and structure of the Task Force has yet to be determined.
- The Task Force will report to a Deputy Minister Steering Committee, led by Justice & Solicitor General with representation from Alberta Health, Municipal Affairs, and Treasury Board & Finance.
- The Task Force will work in collaboration with the cross-ministerial committee, municipalities, law enforcement and other key stakeholders to develop and implement a framework for Cannabis that aligns with the federal government initiative.

Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis: Role of Municipalities

- Production
 - Commercial vs. agricultural zoning and taxation considerations;
 - Environmental impacts and risks;
 - Home grow regulation and oversight; and
 - Municipal hazards and building safety considerations.
- Retail
 - Licensing and fees;
 - Oversight, inspection and enforcement responsibilities;
 - Retail staff training and point-of sale education; and
 - Storefront bylaws and retail sales restrictions and/or limits.
- Zoning
 - Permission or prohibition on where cannabis consumption will be allowed.

Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis: Role of Municipalities

- Drug-Impaired Driving
 - Training for law enforcement on roadside screening devices;
 - Expansion of the Drug Recognition Expert program for police; and
 - Enforcement of any possible provincial administrative laws or zero tolerance policies.
- Communications & Monitoring
 - Public education & awareness; and
 - Data collection and sharing to monitor new cannabis systems.
- Medical Cannabis
 - Support for continued access to medical cannabis.

Legalization and Regulation of Cannabis: Going Forward – Next Steps

- Federal officials are aware that the legalization of cannabis is complex.
- It is anticipated that Alberta will have approximately two and a half years from the time the legislation is introduced to work with municipalities to develop the necessary provincial policies, programs and legislation for the legalization of cannabis.
- Consultations will likely take place after the introduction of federal legislation in Spring 2017.
 - The feedback from consultation will be analyzed for general themes and a *What We Heard* document will be prepared and used to inform future policy decisions.



Thank you

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