



## **2024 BC Election Advocacy Toolkit**

### **Introduction**

BC's Alliance of Beverage Licensees (ABLE BC) is the leading advocate for BC's private liquor and cannabis industry. We are the united voice of BC's bars, pubs, private liquor stores, and private cannabis stores, advocating on behalf of our membership to ensure business-friendly policies that allow small business owners to thrive.

As we approach a pivotal election, the ABLE BC team is ramping up government relations efforts to ensure the voices of BC's private liquor and cannabis businesses are heard loud and clear.

The outcome of this election could significantly impact our industry, and we need to act now to protect and promote the interests of owners like you. **You can help our efforts by [engaging with your local candidates](#) and sharing our [key messages](#) to help them understand our industry's needs.**

Regardless of the election's outcome, we know the legislature's composition will change significantly after election day. This is a crucial time to build relationships with key decision-makers and ensure our industry's concerns are front and centre.

This toolkit will equip you with the tools to support our advocacy efforts by engaging with your local candidates today.

### **Election Advocacy 101 Sessions**

To help you prepare for discussions with candidates, register for an Election Advocacy 101 session. These sessions give you a chance to learn how you can engage your local candidates and highlight ABLE BC's election [key messages](#).

If you can't attend an Advocacy 101 session, contact [ann@ablebc.ca](mailto:ann@ablebc.ca) to access the presentation slides, or skip to the [Candidate Meeting Guide](#) section of this toolkit.

#### **Thursday, October 3**

- 12:30 pm-1:00 pm
- [Register here](#)

#### **Monday, October 7**

- 2:30 pm-3:30 pm
- [Register here](#)

#### **Thursday, October 10**

- 2:30 pm-3:30 pm
- [Register here](#)



## Candidate Meeting Guide

[Click here to find your local candidate](#), then reach out to request a meeting.

**Meeting Request Text:** *I am reaching out as the **(owner/manager)** of **(company)** in your riding. We want to request a short meeting to discuss issues that matter most to our business and how we might work together to benefit our industry in **(city)**. Specifically, we are concerned about **(insert key message(s))**. Thank you very much for putting your name forward to represent our community, and I look forward to connecting.*

Follow these steps to ensure a successful meeting with your candidate.

### 1) Introduce yourself and your company/ABLE BC

- Thank the candidate/staff for taking the meeting.
- Provide the name of your company/organization and the town/city/community you are based in.
- If possible, mention any specific initiatives or announcements that have benefited your sector.

### 2) Provide details about your company/organization

- Detail how your company/organization provides benefits to the community. E.g., how many people you employ or what community initiatives you support.
- Tell a specific success story/particular project that your organization has led and how it benefited the candidate's community and constituents.

### 3) Ask/Advocacy

- Outline the [key messages](#) that are most impactful to your business.

### 4) Further Dialogue

- Ask the candidate about their experience with the ask, especially concerning their constituency.
- Identify any areas for follow up or next steps, including offering additional materials/documents relevant to the discussion.
- Establish a contact that will be your point person.
- Thank the candidate/staff again for the meeting and their time.

### 5) Post-meeting

- Send a thank you note and include any additional materials you mentioned during the meeting.

**Thank You Text:** *Thank you for taking the time to meet with me on **(date)**. We appreciate the chance to connect. If you have any further questions about the issues we discussed or would like more information, please feel free to reach out at any time. You can reach me at **(phone/email)**.*



## Key Messages for Engaging with Candidates

### General

- ABLE BC members are small businesses that collectively add \$15 Billion to BC's economy annually and create thousands of jobs in the province.
- ABLE BC's industry benchmark survey shows that over 40% of respondents are operating at a loss or breaking even.
- Liquor retailers, pubs, and bars are struggling with labour shortages, rising food and alcohol costs, and shifting consumer habits.

### Liquor Retailers

- Private liquor retail stores are a multi-billion-dollar industry and employ thousands of people in BC.
- Protecting the integrity and value of BC's private liquor licences is essential to maintaining a stable, competitive marketplace for consumers and businesses.
- BC currently has 670 private liquor stores and 198 government-operated stores, totaling 868 liquor outlets. This is more than adequate and competitive for the province, especially as alcohol consumption is declining. Limiting new licences is essential to support the success of small businesses.
- We strongly support the continued moratorium on new licences and upholding the provincial 1 km distance rule to safeguard the investments of existing retailers.

### Cannabis Retailers

- The BC Liquor Distribution Branch (LDB) generated [\\$574.5 million](#) in revenue in the 2023–2024 fiscal year, including sales from government-operated stores and licensed retailers that purchase cannabis through the LDB.
- Licensed cannabis retailers protect consumers by ensuring a safe supply of cannabis products and preventing the sale of cannabis to minors, unlike the illicit marketplace, who sell untested products and do not verify ages, putting minors at risk.
- Stronger measures are needed to fight illegal cannabis operators. This includes reducing red tape and provincial taxes for legal operators, which would provide the resources needed to compete with the illicit market. Additionally, stronger targeted enforcement actions against illegal sellers and enhanced penalties are essential.



### **Cannabis Retailers Continued**

- We encourage government to invest in educating the public, in collaboration with licensed retailers, about the benefits of buying from legal stores. This is a critical step toward reducing the impact of the illicit market and ensuring a safer and more successful cannabis industry in BC.
- Establish a provincial minimum distance requirement between all cannabis retailers (including government-operated BC Cannabis Stores). Provincial regulation would provide clear guidelines and protect the investment of small businesses. Currently, distance requirements are managed at the municipal level, which creates volatility for legal operators across regions.
- Legal cannabis retailers are prohibited from purchasing wholesale products with a credit card and from arranging payment terms with suppliers. Allowing these small businesses to use credit cards for wholesale purchases and arrange payment terms supports their financial growth and stability and creates a more sustainable landscape that allows legal operators to effectively compete with the illicit market.

### **Enhancing Public Safety**

- Increase public safety grants for businesses facing issues with crime and vandalism. Liquor and cannabis establishments need to upgrade safety features and face ongoing repairs. Small businesses are on the front lines of our public safety crisis and need support.



ALLIANCE OF BEVERAGE LICENSEES  
FOR A RESPONSIBLE LIQUOR INDUSTRY

## Contact Us

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