

**THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF GRAND FORKS
AGENDA – PRIMARY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Monday May 28th, 2012
Council Chambers City Hall**

	<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUBJECT MATTER</u>	<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>
1.	<u>CALL TO ORDER</u>		Call Meeting to order after the Regular Meeting has been recessed
2.	<u>PRIMARY COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA</u>		
	-	Agenda for May 28th , 2012	Adoption of Agenda
3.	<u>DELEGATIONS:</u> None		
4.	<u>UNFINISHED BUSINESS:</u> None		
5.	<u>RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION:</u> None		
6.	<u>OPERATIONAL DISCUSSIONS FROM STAFF:</u> None		
7.	<u>INFORMATION ITEMS:</u>		
	- Summary of Informational Items	Information Items 7(a) - 7(a)	Receive the items and direct staff to act upon as recommended
8.	<u>PROPOSED BYLAWS FOR DISCUSSION:</u> None		
9.	<u>LATE ITEMS:</u>		
10.	<u>REPORTS, QUESTIONS AND INQUIRIES FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL (VERBAL</u>		
11.	<u>QUESTION PERIOD FROM THE PUBLIC</u>	Attendees in the gallery may ask Council questions at this time.	Hear Presentations and refer any issues for further discussion. Hear from the Public
12.	<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>	Adjournment	

April 26, 2012

Hon. Christy Clark
Premier
West Annex, Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC
V8V 1X4

Mr. Adrian Dix
Leader of the Opposition
Room 201, Parliament Buildings
Victoria BC
V8V 1X4

John Cummins
Leader
BC Conservative Party
PO Box 30065
North Vancouver, BC
V7H 2Y8

Re: Discussion required on marijuana policy

Dear Premier Clark, Mr. Dix and Mr. Cummins:

As mayors of BC municipalities, we are fully aware of the harms stemming from the province's large illegal marijuana industry. Our communities have been deeply affected by the consequences of marijuana prohibition including large-scale grow-ops, increased organized crime and ongoing gang violence. Increasing law enforcement costs also significantly impact municipal budgets.

We see a seemingly endless stream of anti-marijuana law enforcement initiatives in our communities, yet marijuana remains widely and easily available to our youth. Based on the evidence before us, we know that laws that aim to control the marijuana industry are ineffective and, like alcohol prohibition in the US in the 1920s, have led to violent unintended consequences.

The case against current marijuana laws is compelling. Despite major taxpayer investments in law enforcement activities, the marijuana market has not been suppressed. Furthermore, the province's massive illegal marijuana trade drives organized crime in BC and throughout the Pacific Northwest. The Organized Crime Agency of BC estimates that organized crime groups control 85% of BC's marijuana trade, which the Fraser Institute estimates is worth up to \$7 billion annually. U.S. federal prosecutors have identified BC-based drug gangs that control the marijuana trade as "the dominant organized crime threat in the Northwest."

Even though anti-marijuana law enforcement is active and growing, marijuana potency is increasing while price is decreasing. Rates of use remain high. Youth report easier access to marijuana than to tobacco while organized crime reaps massive marijuana-related profits. Given

these facts, we conclude that a more effective, evidence-based approach to controlling marijuana is urgently needed.

As BC mayors, we support the Stop the Violence BC campaign. It is time to tax and strictly regulate marijuana under a public health framework; regulating marijuana would allow the government to rationally address the health concerns of marijuana, raise government tax revenue and eliminate the huge profits from the marijuana industry that flow directly to organized crime. According to public health experts, strict regulation of the marijuana market may also reduce marijuana use. In fact, the success in reducing rates of tobacco use has been achieved through public health regulation, not prohibition.

We are also concerned about the policing and related law enforcement costs that will be placed upon municipalities due to proposed federal mandatory minimum sentencing legislation related to marijuana. Such prescribed and inflexible policies have proven costly and ineffective in the US. We ask you to instead consider how a public health framework that calls for strict marijuana regulation and taxation can help address the intractable problems of gangs and gang violence in BC.

Stop the Violence BC is not alone in its call for a regulated, public health approach to adult marijuana use. The Fraser Institute and the Health Officers Council of BC, among others, have made similar recommendations and your BC public is onside. According to a recent Angus Reid poll, only 12% of British Columbians support the current approach of marijuana prohibition, with the vast majority supporting taxation and regulation.

We recognize and fully understand public dissatisfaction with today's marijuana laws. Therefore, we will be recommending that the Union of BC Municipalities support a motion in favour of taxation and regulation of marijuana. We also encourage politicians to speak their conscience, even if their views go beyond the silence coming from the political parties themselves.

Given the ongoing gang activity, widespread availability of marijuana and high costs associated with enforcement, leaders at all levels of government must take responsibility for marijuana policy. We are asking you as provincial leaders to take a new approach to marijuana regulation. Our communities, our youth and our public finances will benefit from an evidence-based, public health approach to marijuana.

Signed,

James Baker
Mayor of Lake Country

Chris Pieper
Mayor of Armstrong

Gregor Robertson
Mayor of Vancouver

Howie Cyr
Mayor of Enderby

Darrell Mussatto
Mayor of North Vancouver City

Robert Sawatzky
Mayor of Vernon

Derrick Corrigan
Mayor of Burnaby

John Ranns
Mayor of the District of Metchosin

cc: MPs, MLAs and city councils in British Columbia

Mr. Heath Slee, Director
Union of BC Municipalities
60-10551 Shellbridge Way
Richmond, BC V6X 2W9

Stop the Violence BC

About

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British Columbia Municipalities Show Support for Cannabis Regulation and Taxation

Over the last couple of months, Stop the Violence BC has been working closely with municipalities around BC to discuss and pass motions calling for the regulation and taxation of cannabis.

To date, four city councils, **Enderby, North Vancouver, Vernon and Victoria** have joined the call for a public health approach to cannabis regulation and taxation in British Columbia.

Please see below for full text of the suggested motion.

[Enderby's](#) motion will be made available online here.

[North Vancouver's](#) motion will be available shortly.

Vancouver's motion can be downloaded [here](#).

[Vernon's](#) motion can be viewed here, on page 4 of the PDF.

[Victoria's](#) motion can be viewed here.



Politicians cannot hope to win a war on drugs when their policies ensure that only the most efficient trafficking networks survive. Not only do they survive but they thrive because law enforcement has destroyed the competition for them by picking off the until traffickers and leaving the most evolved ones take over the lucrative trafficking space. The destruction of the Medellín and Cali cartels, for instance, only created a vacuum for hundreds of smaller (and more efficient) operations. Now the police cannot even count the number of smaller cartels that have taken over - much less try to infiltrate and disrupt them.

Simon Trice
Director of the Drug Policy Project at the Institute for Policy Studies

Please note, this website is not Internet Explorer compatible

Motion Supporting a Regulatory Approach to Cannabis Control:

WHEREAS cannabis prohibition efforts have failed to effectively limit the availability of cannabis, especially to our youth;

WHEREAS cannabis prohibition has created a large financial opportunity that has fueled an increasingly violent illegal market with expanding organized crime involvement;

WHEREAS academic, law enforcement and health experts, including the Health Officers Council of BC, believe that a strictly controlled public health oriented regulatory framework for cannabis control has the potential to reduce rates of cannabis use, raise substantial tax revenue, undermine organized crime and save law enforcement time and expenditures;

WHEREAS many BC municipalities are increasingly affected by the harms of cannabis prohibition (e.g. grow-ops, etc), which negatively impacts community health and safety;

WHEREAS BC municipalities are increasingly bearing the financial burden of failed policy approaches that emphasize enforcement of marijuana prohibition over evidence-based policies, consuming significant portions of municipal budgets and diverting law enforcement attention away from criminal activities where police involvement can better improve community safety;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Council XXX supports the taxation and regulation of cannabis to address the ineffectiveness and harms of cannabis prohibition, and write to the Southern Interior Local Government Association, Union of BC Municipalities, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and Provincial and Federal Ministers in the Justice and Health departments to inform them of our support.

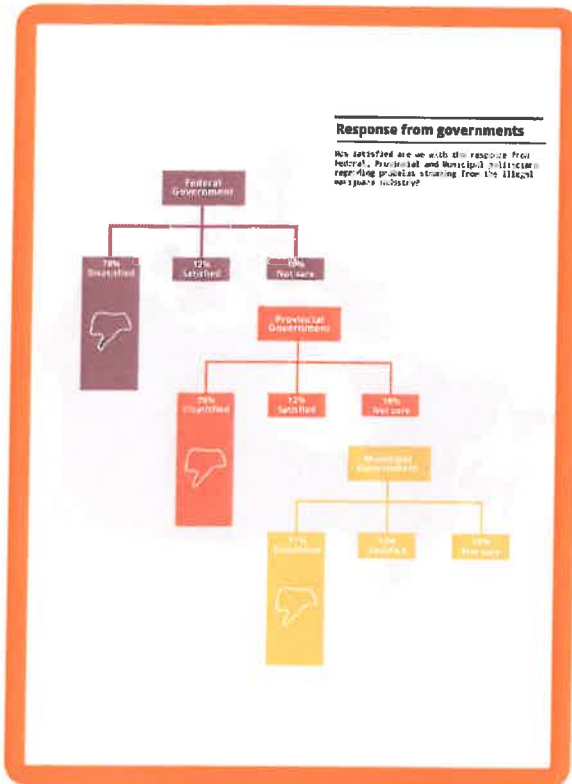
Tags: City Council, Enderby, Motion, North Vancouver, Vernon, Victoria

← Media Coverage: Stop the Violence BC Presents John McKay

City of Vancouver Passes Cannabis Regulation and Taxation Motion →

About the Stop the Violence Coalition

Stop the Violence BC is a coalition of law enforcement officials, legal experts, public health officials and academic experts from universities across the province, including the University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, the University of Victoria, and the University of Northern BC. Coalition members have come together to engage British Columbians in a discussion aimed at developing and implementing cannabis-related policies that improve public health while reducing social harms, including violent crime and gang activity.



Driving discussion

Stop the Violence BC encourages the public, media, politicians, academics and law enforcement to engage in an open dialogue about this pressing public safety issue. Public forums with academic and law enforcement experts continue to be held and prominent British Columbians - including politicians - are regularly asked to acknowledge and/or support the call for policymakers to adopt a public health approach. This entails legalizing and strictly regulating cannabis to reduce gang-related violence in BC by effectively ending the cannabis cash cow for organized crime.

To facilitate an evidence-based discussion among media, policymakers, and the general public, Stop the Violence BC has already released two reports with the latest in scientific research, crime statistics and poll data.

Call for regulation of cannabis

Guided by the best available scientific evidence, Stop the Violence BC is calling for cannabis to be governed by a strict regulatory public health framework aimed at limiting use, while also starving organized crime of the profits they currently reap as a result of cannabis prohibition.

Political leaders have been largely silent on this urgent public health and safety issue. Ongoing gang violence and other organized crime concerns associated with the cannabis trade in BC must be addressed by getting to the roots of the gang violence. BC needs to be a leader in starting a conversation on cannabis regulation that will lead to action.

Involving the community

The public can show their support for addressing this pressing public policy area by attending the STVBC forums, sharing their views and questions with the Stop the Violence Coalition members, and by making their voices heard in other public forums, including writing to their local media, mayors, councilors, MLAs and MPs to let them know that they support the coalition and its efforts.

To engage directly with the Stop the Violence community by sharing information, asking questions, or to easily access STVBC's materials, people can find us on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/StoptheViolenceBC

Twitter: www.twitter.com/stvbc

YouTube: www.youtube.com/stoptheviolence

Updates will also be posted regularly on our website at: www.stoptheviolencebc.org.

First report

This detailed report, the first in a series from the Stop the Violence BC Coalition, outlines the links between cannabis prohibition in BC, the growth of organized crime and the expansion of related violence in the province. The report also defines the public health concept known as “regulation” and sets the stage for a much-needed public conversation around alternatives to cannabis prohibition.

A regulated market for cannabis specifically refers to a legal market for adult cannabis use, with strict regulatory controls placed upon it. These controls could include prohibitions on advertisement and public promotion as well as age restrictions and restrictions on where cannabis could be consumed. These regulatory tools have proven effective at reducing rates of tobacco use. Taxation allows for proceeds from the cannabis market to be used for programs that benefit society.



For more poll results visit: www.stoptheviolencebc.org/tag/poll/

Second report

The second report by the Stop the Violence BC Coalition focuses on the impact of drug law enforcement on cannabis availability and the expansion of organized crime in BC. Although increased funding for anti-cannabis law enforcement naturally leads to more cannabis-related arrests and seizures, research shows that these investments do not make cannabis less available or more costly to obtain.

Although Canada has seen a 70% increase in the number of cannabis-related arrests annually, from roughly 39,000 in 1990 to more than 65,000 in 2009, this increase in anti-drug law enforcement expenditures has not made cannabis less available to teenagers and young adults in British Columbia. According to the 2009 Canadian Alcohol and Drug Use Monitoring Survey, 27% of BC's youth (aged 15-24) used cannabis at least once in the previous year. The Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey reported that annual cannabis use among Ontario high school students has doubled since the early 1990s, from under 10% in 1991 to over 20% in 2009. In fact, existing scientific evidence indicates that the enforcing of cannabis prohibition laws does not have a strong bearing on rates of cannabis use.

The prohibition of cannabis has shown several limitations and intended consequences: in the United States, the potency of cannabis has increased and cannabis has become more readily available over the past two decades. At the same time, the cannabis trade's unfettered growth in British Columbia has increased levels of violence, which are directly linked with the massive profits connected to the industry.

These reports demonstrate that current approaches to controlling cannabis have failed to reduce supply and are now contributing to a climate of lethal drug-related violence in BC.

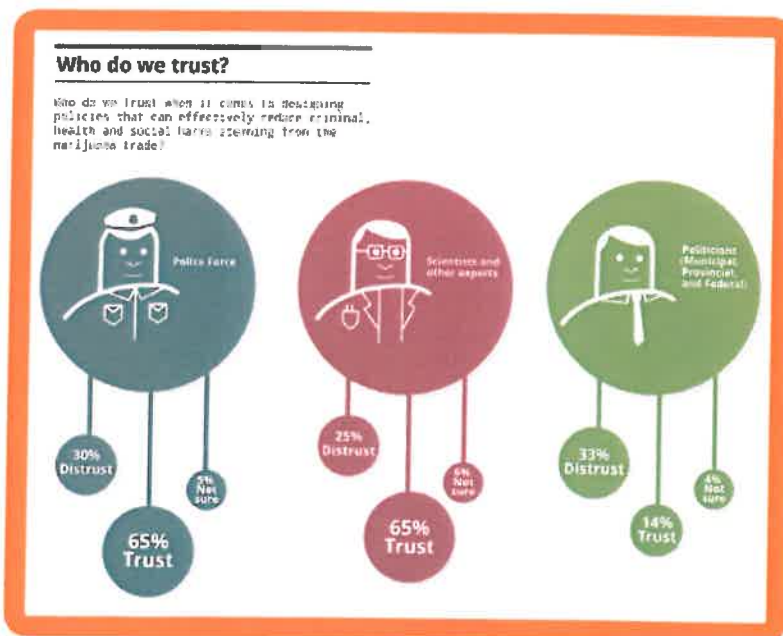
What our supporters say:

Sam Sullivan, Michael Harcourt, Larry Campbell, and Philip Owen, Four former mayors letter of endorsement: "Marijuana prohibition is - without question - a failed policy," write the mayors. "It is creating violent, gang-related crime in our communities and fear among our citizens, and adding financial costs for all levels of government at a time when we can least afford them. Politicians cannot ignore the status quo any longer, and must develop and deliver alternative marijuana policies that avoid the social and criminal harms that stem directly from cannabis prohibition."

Health Officers Council of British Columbia: "From a scientific and public health perspective, we urgently need to pursue alternatives to the blanket prohibition of marijuana which are based on evidence. Strict regulation, guided by a public health framework, is clearly the logical way forward."

Gregor Robertson, Mayor of Vancouver: "Good to see 4 Vancouver ex-mayors calling for end of cannabis prohibition. I agree, we need to be smart and tax/regulate."

Geoff Plant, BC Attorney General, 2001-2005: "It's time for our political leaders to accept and act on the overwhelming evidence linking marijuana prohibition to organized crime and gang violence. Punitive laws such as mandatory minimum sentences are clearly not the solution. Instead, taxation and regulation under a public health framework is the best way forward."



For more poll results visit: www.stoptheviolencebc.org/tag/poll/

Dr. Evan Wood, Director - Urban Health Research Initiative, STVBC Coalition member: "From a scientific and public health perspective we know that making marijuana illegal has not achieved its stated objectives of limiting marijuana supply or rates of use... Given that marijuana prohibition has created a massive financial windfall for violent organized crime groups in BC, we must discuss alternatives to today's failed laws with a focus on how to decrease violence, remove the illicit industry's profit motive and improve public health and safety."

Dr. Thomas Kerr, Director - Urban Health Research Initiative, STVBC Coalition member: "This report should ring alarm bells for political leaders who have been unwilling to acknowledge what the vast majority of British Columbians already understand - cannabis

prohibition is a costly failure... With ongoing gang warfare over massive profits from the illegal cannabis trade and government data clearly showing the easy availability of cannabis despite decades of prohibition, our elected officials must revisit prohibition and tell us what they plan to do to decrease gang violence and protect the health of young British Columbians."

A partial listing of Stop the Violence Coalition members

Law enforcement and legal experts

John Anderson, PhD
Former Correctional Officer
Chair, Dept. of Criminology, VIU
Vice President, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (Canada)

David Bratzer
Police Officer
Board of Directors, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

Vince Cain
Former Chief Coroner
Former RCMP Chief Superintendent

Ross Lander
Retired Justice, Supreme Court of British Columbia

Walter McKay
Former Police Officer
Consultant, WM Consulting
Founder/Director of International Affairs, Asociacion Mexicana de Reduccion de Riesgos y Danos

Academics

Neil Boyd, PhD
Professor and Associate Director, School of Criminology, SFU

Benedikt Fischer, PhD
Professor & CIHR/PHAC Applied Public Health Chair, Faculty of Health Sciences, SFU
Director, Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addictions

Thomas Kerr, PhD
Associate Professor, Dept. of Medicine, UBC
Director, Urban Health Research Initiative, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS

Josee Lavoie, PhD
Associate Professor, School of Health Sciences, UNBC
Assistant Professor, Dept. of Community Health Sciences, UM
Research Affiliate, Manitoba First Nations Centre for Aboriginal Health Research

Cornelia Zeisser, PhD
Post-doctoral fellow, Centre for Addictions Research BC

Health professionals

Jane Buxton, MBBS, MRCP, MSc, FRCPC
Associate Professor, School of Population and Public Health, UBC

John Carsley, MD, MSc, FRCPC
Medical Health Officer

Paul Hasselback, MD, MSc, FRCPC
Medical Health Officer
Clinical Associate Professor, School of Population and Public Health, UBC

Julio Montaner, MD, FRCPC, FCCP, FACP, FRSC
Director, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS
Immediate Past President, International AIDS Society

Evan Wood, MD, PhD, ABIM, FRCPC
Professor, Dept. of Medicine, UBC
Director, Urban Health Research Initiative, BC Centre for Excellence in HIV/AIDS

For a full list of coalition members, please visit: www.stoptheviolencebc.org/about-us

For a copy of the media release, poll data and to arrange interviews, contact:
Crystal Reinitz | Edelman | 604.623.3007 ext. 301 | crystal.reinitz@edelman.com