

The Honourable John Horgan  
Premier & President of the Executive Council  
Legislative Assembly of B.C.  
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, B.C., V8W 9E1

Ms. Stephanie Smith  
President, BCGEU  
4911 Canada Way  
Burnaby, B.C., V5G 3W3

August 24, 2022

**Re: Open letter on behalf of B.C. hospitality, tourism, accommodation, liquor and cannabis retail businesses**

Dear Premier Horgan and Ms. Smith,

As the industry associations and stakeholder groups representing British Columbia's hospitality, liquor, tourism, accommodation, and cannabis retail businesses, we are relieved to hear that the B.C. Government and the B.C. General Employees Union (BCGEU) will return to the bargaining table to negotiate an end to this damaging strike. We urge you to find a resolution quickly.

Since the BCGEU commenced job action on Aug. 15, B.C.'s hospitality, liquor, and cannabis businesses have already begun to experience product shortages with severe impacts on their revenue. We have been cut off from vital inventory needed to maintain the viability of our businesses and the jobs we support and create. Should this strike continue, our industries will unfairly bear the brunt of serious economic consequences including business closures and layoffs, cancelled events such as concerts and weddings, loss of consumer confidence, and damage to B.C.'s reputation among tourists and consumers.

**We cannot afford for this strike to continue.**

This labour dispute is deeply troubling to the thousands of small businesses and almost 200,000 workers who are still struggling to recover financially from the damage of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Our industries are comprised of thousands of small business owners who invest their savings, sweat, and tears into this sector, and provide employment for hundreds of thousands of British Columbians, many of them young and at the start of their careers.

**As you know, B.C.'s hospitality and tourism industries were devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Up until 2020, B.C.'s hospitality and tourism sector was growing faster than the provincial economy as a whole, with more than \$22.3 billion in revenue annually, and supporting more than 250,000 jobs. But two years of restrictive Public Health orders, mandated closures, and capacity limits caused losses in business, revenue, and workforce, and left us with high debt

loads and depleted bank accounts. Approximately 20 per cent of businesses in our sector did not survive the pandemic. The rest are still struggling to recover.

We support the right of government employees to bargain collectively, but the decision by the BCGEU to target liquor distribution centres drags the province's hospitality, tourism, liquor and cannabis industries into a dispute that has nothing to do with us, and deals yet another crushing blow when we're only just getting back on our feet.

On behalf of our collective memberships, we will not accept becoming collateral damage in your labour dispute. As both parties return to the negotiating table, we ask you to put the interests of British Columbia first, and resolve your differences immediately to prevent further losses and impacts to the hospitality and tourism sector. As an act of good faith, we also urge for the removal of picket lines while negotiations are ongoing.

We have supported and cared for British Columbians throughout the global pandemic. Please do the same for us.

Sincerely,

Alliance of Beverage Licensees (ABLE BC)  
BC Chamber of Commerce  
BC Craft Brewers Guild  
BC Craft Ciders  
BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association  
Beer Canada  
British Columbia Hotel Association  
Craft Distiller's Guild of BC  
Greater Vancouver Board of Trade  
Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce  
Hotel Association of Vancouver  
New Wave Wine Society  
Restaurants Canada  
Rural Liquor Store Advisor Society  
Spirits Canada  
Surrey Board of Trade  
Tourism Industry Association of BC  
Victoria Chamber of Commerce  
Wine Growers British Columbia