



Labatt Breweries  
of Canada

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March 14, 2014

Ms. Linda Rowe  
Deputy City Clerk  
London City Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
P.O. Box 5035  
London, ON N6A 4L9  
lrowe@london.ca

Dear Ms. Rowe:

I am writing in advance of the April 8, 2014 meeting of the Corporate Services Committee regarding Labatt Breweries of Canada's request for an exemption under the Retail Business Holidays Act to enable Labatt to offer public tours and open our on-site retail store on select public holidays.

Labatt provides guided tours of our London brewery to 5,500 people every year, but the provincial legislative framework prohibits us from offering these services to tourists on many holidays.

This request is timely because of the city's success in bringing the Memorial Cup to London, which will be a large draw for tourists. Labatt is a sponsor of the 2014 Memorial Cup through our top selling Canadian brand, Budweiser. London's hosting of the Memorial Cup stimulated a review of Labatt's holiday activities, and has made us realize that because of our inability to provide tours and retail services on some holidays, we are missing opportunities to offer tourists with a unique local experience.

Ontario's wineries have proven to be successful tourist attractions, including on holidays, by offering tours and retail opportunities. Labatt believes that the historical nature of our brewery in London could be just as attractive for tourists on select holidays. We are requesting City Council's assistance to make our brewery more attractive for tourists.

**Description of the retail business establishment for which the retail is being sought**

In accordance with O. Reg. 711/91, section 6.(1)1, Labatt is seeking an exemption for the following retail business:

- Tours of the Labatt brewery at 150 Simcoe Street, including the brewhouse and fermenting rooms located within the brewery;

- The on-site retail store located at the corner of Richmond and Horton Streets, which would serve as the departure point for guided brewery tours.

An exemption for the above retail business would enable us to engage tourists in other memorable ways:

- Provide opportunities for charitable fundraising activities on holidays, including charity barbecues and bottle-drives;
- Provide public viewing of the historic Labatt Streamliner truck (weather permitting);
- Create holiday specific programming that highlights particular aspects of our history and operations, such as our early days on the Simcoe Street site and our support for Canadian Forces serving overseas.

### **Qualifying for an exemption under the Retail Business Holidays Act**

For any business to qualify for a tourist exemption under the section 2.(1) of O. Reg. 711/91 of the Retail Business Holidays Act, it must meet one of the following criteria:

- A natural or outdoor recreational attraction;
- An historical attraction;
- A cultural, multi-cultural or educational attraction.

While the tourism experience at our London brewery has both cultural and educational components, it is our unique history on that site that, we believe, makes it possible for us to apply for an exemption from Council as an “historical attraction.” It is our rich history that, we believe, distinguishes us from most other applications for tourist exemptions under the Retail Business Holidays Act.

In accordance with O.Reg. 711/91 section 6.(1)3, Labatt meets the tourism criteria as an “historical attraction” because visitors can expect to be informed of some of the following:

- Labatt’s Simcoe Street site is the location of a founding Canadian business that pre-dates Confederation. The location is where John Kinder Labatt began brewing beer in 1847.
- The expansion of Canada’s railway networks was instrumental in the growth of Labatt’s London brewery. In the 1850’s, when the Great Western Railway was completed, the beers brewed on Simcoe Street were able to reach consumers in Toronto, Montreal and the Maritimes.
- The Labatt brewery in London survived Prohibition by producing full-strength beer for distribution in the United States and by offering “temperance ales” for sale in Ontario.

- In the 1950s, Labatt embarked on a period of rapid expansion with the goal of becoming Canada's national brewer. Breweries in British Columbia, Montreal, Toronto and Newfoundland became part of the Labatt family
- Labatt's role in introducing innovative products to consumers -- including the first-ever twist top cap on a refillable bottle in 1984.
- Labatt's support for Canadian Forces personnel serving overseas. This tradition started in the Korean War and continues today.

### **Request for specific holidays only**

It is worth noting that the legislative framework currently provides Labatt with the ability to open on some holidays, notably Boxing Day and Simcoe Day, but not others.

In accordance with section 6.(1)2 of O.Reg. 711/91, the request for a tourism exemption is seasonal in nature and limited to holidays when we believe there is the greatest opportunity to engage tourists. Based on our knowledge of the tourist industry, we are limiting our request to Council for a tourist exemption to Victoria Day, Canada Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day.

We are not seeking an exemption for Christmas Day, Family Day, Good Friday or Easter Sunday at this time.

### **Contribution to London's economy**

Labatt is a strong contributor to the London economy, with over 400 employees employed at the brewery. We are proud London is our hometown brewery.

We think our story, and our brewery experience, is an exciting one for tourists. By granting a tourist exemption for four holidays under the Retail Business Holidays Act, City Council would help strengthen the local economy by helping Labatt provide new experiences and opportunities for tourists.

Please do not hesitate contact me should you want to discuss this application for an exemption under the Retail Business Holidays Act.

Sincerely,



Chris Morley  
Senior Director, Corporate Affairs