

From: Debbie France
Sent: Friday, September 18, 2020 4:00 PM
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Subject: [EXTERNAL] Stop Illicit Cannabis Grow Operations

Hello Clerk Saunders, Mayor Holder and Councillors at the city of London,
Kindly share the information beneath and add it to your agenda for discussion at your next council meeting. We all face cannabis issues.

Thanks kindly,

Debbie France

Stop Illicit Cannabis Grow Operations

This email is being sent to all municipalities in Ontario who are being unjustly impacted by the outbreak in cannabis grow operations that choose not to follow municipal bylaws and regulations.

These grow operations are surging throughout Ontario exposing residents to personal safety and health risks.

What has caused the problem?

Loopholes in cannabis legislation

Loophole after loophole in cannabis legislation continues to be exploited. The legalization of cannabis was meant to keep cannabis from our youth and to get it off the black market. According to law enforcement, legislation has had the opposite effect. It has allowed organized crime to gain an even stronger foothold.

Why work together with other municipalities?

Residents are suffering from the unintended consequences of some of the components of cannabis legislation.

- Many cannabis operations are operating without the required municipal permits, required set-backs and in areas not municipally zoned for cannabis operations.

- According to police, there is a threat to community safety. Guns have been seized at raids. Profits have been known to fund other crimes such as methamphetamine labs and cannabis can be used as currency to trade for cocaine and guns coming from United States. Organized crime has found a way to be comfortably sheltered within existing cannabis laws.
- Obnoxious skunk-like odours are adversely impacting the health and well being of residents.
- Risks to drinking water supply from excessive water usage and chemical contamination.
- Light and noise pollution.
- Greenhouses and other facilities that could be used for more legitimate job creating purposes are often being used for illicit cannabis production.
- Residents are afraid to voice their concerns in public as they fear the criminal element.
- A standardized and enforceable solution will significantly reduce many of the costs municipalities are currently facing.

Over the last few weeks, I have fielded phone calls and emails from residents of Norfolk County and across the province who live in municipalities attempting to control the outbreak. The municipalities all appear to be going to great lengths to help their impacted residents but the common response from everyone is that there isn't an immediate enforceable solution.

In developing a solution, it is important to consider the contributing factors to this problem

- It appears as though many cannabis producers are boldly going forward with their operation without regard for municipal regulations believing they can potentially hide behind the Ministry of Agriculture, Right to Farm legislation that was established to protect farmers who feed our country.
- Far too often, cannabis operations disregard compliance to local bylaws and zoning regulations. Court cases often take years.
- Many cannabis operations are difficult to monitor and are improperly regulated.
- There doesn't seem to be a cannabis tracking system in place for the vast majority of these operations. Where is the cannabis going?
- The secluded locations of these growers make it challenging for enforcement.
- Police raids have revealed that many of these operations are growing beyond their allowable plant limits.

- When the national cannabis prescription average is 2 grams per day as of March 2020 one has to question why the College of Physicians and Surgeons are not questioning or investigating prescriptions as high as 100-150 grams per day.

The purpose of the Cannabis Act was to displace the illicit market but it has actually given it a banner to flourish under a legal license.

Unfortunately, our Federal Government put us in this position. It's long overdue for our Provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and our Federal and Provincial Ministers of Health, Agriculture and Justice to place the personal safety and health of residents first.

What should a solution involve?

- Change in Federal and Provincial legislation and/or regulation is required to eliminate the loopholes that the criminal element has taken advantage of.
- Delegation of inspection authority to local municipalities would allow for fire, health and building inspections. Law enforcement would continue to have authority of plant count and the validity of operational authenticity.
- There is a need to verify prescriptions and the doctors who issue them.

THE ASK...

1. This issue MUST be raised at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

2. We are requesting municipalities to join together and place this at the top of our Provincial and Federal Governments "must urgently fix" list. All levels of government need to be involved in developing a standardized and enforceable solution. Reach out to your MP's and MPP's.

There is strength and leverage in numbers. Join together with other municipalities and demand an enforceable solution from our Ministers.

Thanks kindly,

Debbie France

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Resident of Norfolk County