



President's Message

Al McCreary, President, ABLE BC

What are the key issues ABLE BC is currently working on?

At this time we're in discussion with the government regarding significant changes recently made. The decision to disconnect LPs from LRSs, made it even more important to ensure that there is a separation between LRSs. ABLE asked for and the government has now granted a 1 km separation between LRS locations (previously 0.5 km).

We're also concerned that the government doubled penalties, so violations for serving minors now result in a \$7,500 fine or a two-week closure, which is very onerous for a small business. Even though establishments may have great procedures to check ID, sometimes the minors can outsmart the operators. ABLE believes that if the company is a first offender, then penalties should be reduced.

An ongoing issue is restaurants acting like bars. If they want to do this, they should have to go through the same public input process as pubs and LRSs. We also want the government to enforce the regulations that they have put in place.

With the increase in casinos and other gaming establishments, we are encouraging the government and BCLC to develop more lottery products and increase commissions.

ABLE is also working on allowing LRSs to sell liquor to special occasion license holders so we can supply the market for weddings, family reunions, festivals, etc. The government needs to be made aware that we have the tracking systems in place to manage these orders and report the sales to government.

What is the Association's mandate over the next year?

In a lot of ways nothing changes. We will continue to make sure we look after the needs of our members and ensure their businesses succeed. We have programs for insurance and other benefits, and we will continue to work with government to be sure we're competitive in the marketplace.

What personal goal do you want to achieve during your term as President?

My goal changes from time to time as government regulations change, but I want to maintain a strong association, and as we go forward, be sure we are

relevant to our members and look after their needs as well as the challenges facing LRSs and pubs. I want to be sure we're acting as the voice of all liquor establishments in the province.

How can pubs compete more effectively with restaurants?

Restaurants are acting more like bars and being designed to look like pubs, so the key thing we can do is to improve food, which we've been doing over the past few years. We need to be more than just a place to buy draft beer. We must continue to be a social neighbourhood place to meet friends, whether to watch the hockey game or just get together.

What do you think the repercussions will be of the new regulations related to LRSs?

It's still so early, it's hard to say. The reactions from our members thus far are mixed - some are happy and some are concerned. The government needs to ensure LRSs are freestanding and don't become part of convenience or grocery stores and we are pleased with the new 1 km limit. As the industry is evolving, it's a concern of both government and our members that there aren't too many stores in the market. We need to maintain a balance between good customer service while ensuring we're not over-saturating the market.

What's the main competitive advantage that a LRS has compared to a GLS?

It could be summarized as the 3 C's - chilled, convenience, and choice. We have the opportunity to be located on major fares and close to shopping centres. We're in business to meet the needs of our neighbourhoods, so if they like certain types of wine, we can bring them in. We also have longer hours of operation, so consumers can easily pick up product when it's convenient to them. As a small business operating in a neighbourhood, we also give back to the community by working with sports teams and other community groups.

I'm looking forward to my term as President. I think it's important for someone from up north to take a turn now and then and for smaller communities to get involved in the association. We always want to ensure that our board represents the whole province.



"Personal Professional Service"

- Litigation & Administrative Matters Regarding Liquor Licensing
- Consultants to the Hospitality Industry

Dennis Coates

700 - 275 Lansdowne Street
Kamloops, BC V2C 6H6

Cell: (250) 319-4808

Email: dpc@mjbllaw.com

Barry Carter

855 W. Georgia Street
Vancouver, BC V6C 3E8

Phone: (604) 682-6299

Email: jbc@mjbllaw.com

Mair Jensen Blair LLP - Lawyers

Toll Free: 1-888-374-3161 • fax: (250) 374-6992