



B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union
A Component of NUPGE (CLC)

September 8, 2020

VIA EMAIL: Blain.Lawson@bcldb.com

R. Blain Lawson
General Manager and Chief Executive Officer
BC Liquor Distribution Branch
Ministry of Attorney General
3383 Gilmore Way
Burnaby, BC V5G 4S1

Dear R. Blain Lawson,

Re Pandemic pay for all BCLDB workers

As CEO and General Manager of BC Liquor Distribution Branch (BCLDB), your advocacy to include BCLDB employees in the provincial government's temporary pandemic pay program is appreciated. Essential workers deserve pandemic pay.

Even though the government declined your request, BCLDB employees' need for pandemic pay has not disappeared. Since the beginning of the pandemic, BCLDB employees have been interacting with the public at BC Liquor Stores and BC Cannabis Stores and managing higher-than-usual volumes in the BCLDB Warehouses. Not receiving pandemic pay while being designated as essential workers has taken a serious toll on worker morale.

As an experienced public retailer, we know you understand that workers are the backbone of any business. We also know you understand what is at stake when worker morale declines: overstretched customer service, loss of employee pride, reduced revenue, and ultimately, risk of privatization and negative public perception.

Customers have made their feelings clear: they greatly appreciate the extraordinary service of BCLDB employees during this challenging time. As a token of their appreciation and recognition of BCLDB workers' extraordinary efforts, many customers have said they would like a portion of their purchases allocated to temporary pandemic pay.

But can you afford to provide all BCLDB workers with temporary pandemic pay?

During the pandemic, the BCLDB has out-performed sales projections and thus experienced a substantial and unexpected increase in revenue. By our calculations, temporary pandemic pay (a lump-sum payment equivalent to \$4 per hour for straight-time hours worked anytime over a 16-week period starting March 15, 2020 to July 4, 2020) for all BCLDB employees would cost a maximum of \$10 million. That's only 20 per cent of the *excess* revenue generated during Q4 of 2019/2020 compared to the same quarter of the previous year.

This may seem like a lot to justify to our government. However, the Finance Minister herself has explicitly encouraged profitable retailers like the BCLDB to provide pandemic pay for employees.

By allocating just 20 per cent of **excess** revenue, you will help ensure that, for the rest of the pandemic and beyond:

- customers continue to receive quality service
- the province continues to generate extraordinary revenue
- the government's wishes are fulfilled
- employees remain proud of their work and their morale is elevated
- the BCLDB remains a top employer
- British Columbia continues to have a thriving public liquor and cannabis distribution service

The BCGEU supports you fully in saying "yes" to pandemic pay allocated from pandemic revenue, and we welcome the opportunity to discuss with you any internal processes we can help address in order to make it happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie Smith, President

cc. Kusam Doal, Component 5 Vice President – *via email*