

George Ehrler

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(c/ba Comox Valley Cannabis Co.)
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August 26, 2025

Mayor Bob Wells

City of Courtenay
830 Cliffe Avenue
Courtenay, B.C. V9N 2J7

Re: Business Licence Fee Concerns (Licence #15381)

Dear Mayor Wells,

Thank you for your response regarding my concerns with the City of Courtenay's business licence fees. I appreciate your willingness to engage on this matter and your recognition that a broader review is needed.

I would like to formally respond to the points you raised and clearly outline my concerns:

1. Late Fee of \$600

As I mentioned, I did not pay the licence fee immediately because I was awaiting your response regarding the fee structure. Once it became clear that nothing could be done for this fiscal year, I paid the licence fee in full. However, I was then charged a \$600 late penalty. This penalty is disproportionate as it exceeds the full annual licence fee of many businesses in Courtenay. I respectfully request that this late fee be waived, given the circumstances and the excessive nature of the charge.

2. Review of Fees and Charges

I am encouraged to hear that Council has requested a review of fees and charges, and I strongly urge that this review prioritize fairness and equity for cannabis retailers. As legal, regulated businesses, we should not be treated differently than liquor stores or other retail and service outlets. I request that recommendations from this review be in place before the next fiscal cycle so that cannabis businesses are not unfairly penalized for yet another year.

3. Rationale for High Fees

While you noted that Courtenay's fees are in line with Campbell River and other municipalities, my concern is with the rationale specific to Courtenay. Cannabis

retailers are operating legally, under strict provincial and federal regulation, and are contributing positively to the local economy. The current fees create an impression that legal cannabis businesses are being treated as a “cash grab,” rather than as legitimate retailers. I request a clear, detailed rationale for why cannabis business licence fees are set so much higher than other retail businesses in Courtenay.

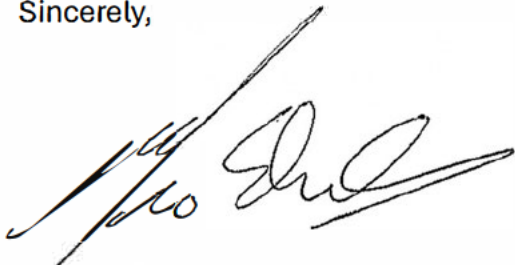
4. Factors Affecting Licence Fees

You mentioned that fees are based on “a variety of factors.” For the sake of transparency and accountability, I ask that the City provide a detailed breakdown of these factors. In particular, I would like clarification on what, if any, additional services are being provided to cannabis retailers that justify the higher fees compared to other businesses.

I believe this discussion is critical for ensuring that Courtenay supports fair business practices and fosters an equitable environment for all legal enterprises. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and the City Manager, as you suggested, to discuss this issue further and to contribute constructively to the upcoming review.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'George Ehrler', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

George Ehrler

Beaufort Botanicals Ltd.

(cba Comox Valley Cannabis Co.)

We respectfully acknowledge that we live, work and play within the traditional territory of the K'ómoks Nation