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Our Reference #: M-2021-4590

April 26, 2021

Her Worship Sandy Brown  
Mayor  
Town of Orangeville

Email: [mayorsoffice@orangeville.ca](mailto:mayorsoffice@orangeville.ca)

Dear Mayor Brown:

Thank you for your letter outlining the Town of Orangeville's resolution regarding radial separation of authorized cannabis retail stores.

With respect to cannabis legalization, our government's top priorities are combatting the illegal market while keeping cannabis out of the hands of youth and our communities safe. Ontario has moved to an open market for retail cannabis licensing, because it is the most effective way to combat the illegal market and provides consumers with more choice, convenience and a safe, reliable supply of cannabis. The open market will naturally limit the number of viable cannabis stores based on consumer demand.

As you know, prospective retailers are able to open cannabis stores only in Ontario municipalities that have opted-in to permitting legal cannabis stores. At the time of municipal opt-in decisions, all municipalities, including the Town of Orangeville, would have been aware of the initial *Cannabis Licence Act, 2018* framework which enabled an open cannabis market.

Our government was transparent regarding the province's tightly regulated private retail model, and municipalities were aware that a decision to opt-in could not be reversed. Municipalities were also aware that if they opted in, they would not have approval authority over the locations of authorized retail stores.

Under the *Cannabis Licence Act, 2018*, authorized cannabis retail stores can be located anywhere that other retail operations are permitted, provided they are compliant with the provincial school distance buffer, which is a minimum distance of 150 meters between cannabis retail stores and schools, including public schools, private, and federally-funded First Nation schools off-reserve.

When determining whether to issue a Retail Store Authorization to a prospective operator, the Registrar of the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario takes into consideration any comments received from municipalities and its residents as part of the 15-day public notice process.

The public notice process is intended to enable the local community to provide its views regarding whether the issuance of an Authorization would be in the “public interest” as defined in section 10 of [Ontario Regulation 468/18](#) under the *Cannabis Licence Act, 2018*.

I appreciate your sharing the Town of Orangeville’s concerns with us as we continue to monitor the evolution of cannabis legalization in the province and its impact on our communities. We are mindful of the important role of municipalities in the effective implementation of cannabis legalization and value your role as an essential partner in this process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug Downey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Doug" and last name "Downey" clearly distinguishable.

Doug Downey  
Attorney General