BIABC Welcomes Provincial Liquor Policy Changes, Encourages Continued Modernization

For Immediate Release
June 2, 2026

VANCOUVER, BC – The Business Improvement Areas of British Columbia (BIABC) is welcoming a three-year pilot project, announced by the provincial government to expand purchasing options for restaurants and hospitality operators - calling it a positive step that reflects recommendations industry stakeholders have been advancing for years.

The announcement follows sustained calls from hospitality operators, private liquor retailers, BIABC and other business organizations, urging government to modernize BC's liquor distribution system and provide greater flexibility for small businesses.

"This announcement is a welcome step in the right direction," said BIABC Executive Board Member Teri Smith. "For many months, BIABC has joined the hospitality industry in encouraging government to provide restaurants and hospitality operators with more flexibility in how they access product, particularly during times of disruption. We are pleased to see government responding to those concerns."

The issue gained prominence during the 2025 BCGEU labour dispute, when restaurants and hospitality businesses across British Columbia faced significant supply challenges as a result of disruptions within the provincial liquor distribution system. BIABC reiterated the concerns during Small Business Week last fall, noting that more than 90 per cent of BC's approximately 15,000 restaurants are small businesses employing fewer than 50 people and that many independent operators remain vulnerable to supply disruptions and rising operating costs.

"Small businesses have been navigating unprecedented challenges in recent years, including the ever-increasing cost of doing business, retail theft, vandalism and property damage," said Smith. "Providing greater flexibility within the liquor distribution system is one positive step, and helps a component of small businesses adapt, remain competitive, and continue serving their customers."

While welcoming today's changes, BIABC says additional opportunities remain to modernize BC's liquor policy framework and reduce unnecessary barriers facing restaurants, pubs, and hospitality operators.

"This announcement demonstrates that on one level at least, government is listening," Smith added. "We encourage the province to continue working with industry stakeholders on further measures that support small businesses, strengthen local economies, and create a more resilient hospitality sector."

BIABC believes continued collaboration between government and industry can help ensure liquor policies support both public objectives and the long-term success of local businesses.

About BIABC
The Business Improvement Areas of BC (BIABC) is the provincial champion of strong, vibrant, and successful downtowns, main streets, and commercial districts throughout the province. Its members represent more than 80 business districts, employing hundreds of thousands of retail, service, and office workers.

– 30 –

Media Contact:
Kelly Gleeson
kgleeson@lbmg.ca
604-240-6231