

Nov. 25, 2021

Adrian Dix

Minister of Health

HLTH.Minister@gov.bc.ca

Harwinder Sandhu

MLA for Vernon-Monashee

Harwinder.Sandhu.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Susan Brown

CEO, Interior Health

Susan.BrownCEO@interiorhealth.ca

Re: Interior capacity limits

Minister Dix, MLA. Sandhu, Ms. Brown

The Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce writes to you regarding a matter that has significant implications for businesses and non-profits in our community.

Specifically, there is an inconsistent approach to Covid-19 capacity limits across B.C. Interior Health continues with 50 per cent capacity limits for indoor sporting events and theatres despite no capacity limits in other parts of B.C. We question how someone attending a hockey game, a concert or a movie in the North Okanagan is more at risk than someone pursuing those activities in Vancouver or Victoria if they all must wear masks and show proof of double vaccination. There is also the reality that an individual from the North Okanagan can attend a venue in Vancouver with no capacity limits and then return home.

Business owners and non-profits have pivoted to provide a safe environment for their patrons and staff, while experiencing the financial challenges Covid-19 have created since spring 2020. A patchwork of protocols across the province only exacerbates the situation, creating confusion and holding back economic recovery.

Interior Health and the provincial government have provided no indication as to when capacity limits within the Interior may be adjusted, and at a minimum, Interior Health needs to provide a benchmark so businesses know what level of cases or vaccination rates must be reached before capacity limits shift.

On behalf of our 600-plus business and non-profit members, the Greater Vernon Chamber requests the following of the Ministry of Health and Interior Health:

- An explanation as to why 50 per cent capacity limits remain in the Interior while other regions of B.C. have no capacity limits;
- A clear and reasonable benchmark and timeline as to when capacity limits can be lifted;
- An explanation as to why all communities within Interior Health must comply with the same regulations when the region is vast and vaccination rates vary between communities;
- More transparent and regular communication about regulations with civic leaders, business owners, non-profits, residents and the media.

If there is any further information that we can provide, please contact us. Thank you for your attention to this important matter and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Dan Proulx
General Manager
Greater Vernon Chamber of Commerce

CC. City of Vernon Mayor and Council
District of Coldstream Mayor and Council
Regional District of North Okanagan Board of Directors
Norm Letnick, Kelowna-Lake Country MLA
Greg Kylo, Shuswap MLA
Vernon Vipers Hockey Club
Vernon & District Performing Arts Centre Society
Vernon Towne Theatre
Okanagan-Shuswap Chambers of Commerce