

CANNABIS LEGALIZATION SPARKING CONCERNS FOR CANADIAN ORGANIZATIONS

Canadians will be able to legally purchase and consume recreational marijuana by mid-September at the latest after the Senate voted to lift almost a century-old prohibition on cannabis.

Senators voted 52-29, with two abstentions, to pass Bill C-45, after seven months of study and debate. Health Minister Ginette PetitpasTaylor has said the provinces will need two to three months after the bill is passed before they'll be ready to implement the new legalized cannabis regime. "We have seen in the Senate tonight a historic vote that ends 90 years of prohibition of cannabis in this country, 90 years of needless criminalization, 90 years of a justsay- no approach to drugs that hasn't worked," said independent Sen. Tony Dean, who sponsored the bill in the upper house. Canada is the first industrialized country to legalize cannabis nationwide.

"I'm proud of Canada today. This is progressive social policy," Dean said. However, Dean and other senators stressed that the government is taking a very cautious, prudent approach to this historic change. Cannabis will be strictly regulated, with the objective of keeping it out of the hands of young people and displacing the thriving black market in cannabis controlled by organized crime.

"What the government's approach has been is, yes, legalization but also strict control," said Sen. Peter Harder, the government's representative in the Senate. "That does not in any way suggest that it's now party time."

Conservative senators remained resolutely opposed to legalization, however, and predicted passage of C-45 will not meet the government's objectives.

"The impact is we're going to have all those involved in illegal marijuana peddling right now becoming large corporations and making a lot of money and they're going to be doing it at the expense of vulnerable people in this country," said Conservative Sen. Leo Housakos, predicting young people will have more—not less—access.

"When you normalize the use of marijuana and you're a young person and you had certain reservations because of the simple fact that it was illegal, there's, I believe, a propensity to have somebody be more inclined to use it."

But Dean countered that the Conservatives have been making the same argument since the bill landed in the Senate seven months ago, regardless of what they heard from expert witnesses. And he suggested that's because they received marching orders from Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer to do everything in their power to delay or block legalization. "That tells me that maybe they haven't been open to learning and listening the way that other senators have in this place," he said of the Conservatives' unchanging position on the bill. By contrast, Dean said many independent senators were initially opposed to or uncertain about legalization but changed their minds after hearing from more than 200 expert witnesses who testified before five different Senate committees that

examined the bill minutely.

The Conservatives are the last remaining openly partisan group in the Senate, to which Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has chosen to name only non-partisan, independent senators recommended by an arm's-length advisory body. Senators last week approved almost four dozen amendments to C-45. The government accepted 27 of them and tweaked two others.

But it rejected 13 amendments. Among the rejected amendments was one which would have authorized provinces to prohibit home cultivation of marijuana if they choose.

Quebec and Manitoba have already decided to ban homegrown pot, even though the bill specifies that individuals can grow up to four plants per dwelling. The purpose of the Senate's amendment was to prevent legal challenges to their constitutional right to do so. Conservative Sen. Claude Carignan attempted Tuesday to have the amendment reinstated in the bill—which would have meant the bill would have to be bounced back to the House of Commons and could have set the stage for a protracted parliamentary battle between the two houses of Parliament.

But senators voted 45-35 not to insist on that change.

Sen. Yuen Pau Woo, leader of the independent group of senators, said C-45 was "a bit of a stress test" for the new, less partisan Senate.

"I think the new Senate came out very well. We worked very hard on

reviewing the bill, proposing amendments" but ultimately deferred to the will of the elected House of Commons, as unelected senators should, he said. More than half (52 per cent) of Canadian organizations are either concerned or very concerned about the implications this will have on the workplace according to a new report by The Conference Board of Canada. "Workplace safety is consistently flagged as employers' top concern with legalization, but the solution is not one-size-fits-all," said Bryan Benjamin, Vice-President, Organizational Performance, The Conference Board of Canada.

"Gauging and managing impairment; adapting workplace policies; and ensuring employees are educated on what is allowed and what remains prohibited are all crucial components to a smooth transition to legalization."

Highlights More than half (52 per cent) of Canadian organizations are either concerned or very concerned about the legalization of cannabis as it pertains to the workplace.

Employers' top concerns include workplace safety, impairment or intoxication, and increased use of cannabis both inside and outside the workplace.

Employers will play a critical role in helping to shape legislation related to impairment, drug testing, and benefits coverage for medical use. In addition to workplace safety, impairment or intoxication, and increased use of cannabis both inside and outside the workplace, employers also expressed concern surrounding testing for impairment, managing accommodation needs, costs of covering medical cannabis and other financial impacts on the organization, and issues related to productivity and employee performance.

The report, Blazing the Trail: What the Legalization of Cannabis Means for Canadian Employers, discusses the varied perspectives on how to evaluate impairment from cannabis, and outlines the need to implement or amend drug policies to address the legalization of cannabis will vary depending on type of work.

The report offers some considerations for employers, including: Determine how stringent the organization should be regarding alcohol and drug testing and potential discipline for impairment on the job. Provide appropriate resources and supports for those who may be suffering from problematic cannabis use and addiction, including employee (family) assistance programs and access to confidential treatment.

Determine whether to allow limited consumption of cannabis during work-related social or networking events.

Educate employees and managers on how to detect and manage problematic use, dependence, and potential cannabis impairment.

This report provides an overview of the landscape for employers as legalization of recreational cannabis approaches. An extensive literature review is supplemented by data from a recent survey of Canadian employers. With the legalization of recreational cannabis now, Ontario's incoming premier said he wants to consult further with municipalities, stakeholders and his caucus before deciding whether to change the plan laid out by his predecessors for the sale of marijuana.

The outgoing Liberals had planned to roll out 150 standalone pot stores run by the Liquor Control Board of Ontario by the end of 2020, with the first 40 scheduled to open this year.

Doug Ford, who was elected this month, had previously suggested he would be open to greater privatization of marijuana sales. But when asked about his plan for pot sales on Thursday, Ford said he's

focusing on the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, which he said already has infrastructure in place that would allow it to sell marijuana once it becomes legal this fall. "What I said is I'd be focusing on the LCBO. I'm private sector, I don't believe government should stick their nose into everything, but again, this is a path we have never went down," he said. "We're going to tread carefully on this and we're going to consult with the local municipalities and we're going to make a decision after we talk to caucus."

The Progressive Conservatives say when the premier-designate talks about focusing on the LCBO, he's referring to Ontario Cannabis Stores run by the LCBO, as the outgoing Liberal government planned. Ford also suggested Thursday that Ottawa had left the provinces with little support to prepare for legalization. "This is a path that the federal government has dumped on all the provinces," he said.

The federal government announced this week that Canadians will be able to legally purchase recreational marijuana starting Oct. 17. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said legalization was pushed back at the request of several provinces who sought more time to make the transition.

Preparing for legalization is a complex undertaking and it's the prerogative of a new government to reconsider how to do so, said Ivan Ross Vrana, a consultant on the cannabis industry with Hill & Knowlton Strategies.

Ford will have to get up to speed with the work that's already been done by Ontario bureaucrats and

what's planned in other provinces, he said.

"With this file I don't think anything is simple, it's really complex, but having said that I think people do know that this has been coming, I think there's public officials, civil servants, people at the (Ontario Cannabis Store) that have been working on this for a while," Vrana said. While it's not necessary to work out every detail by October, Ontario must have some sort of retail system in place by then to meet consumer demand, he said. "The stated goal for everybody—whether it's federal, provincial or municipal—is to ensure that we can tackle the illegal market and the best way to do that is to ensure that there's access for consumers," he said.

The New Democrats, who had criticized the Liberal plan for what they deemed to be an insufficient number of stores, said the premier-designate "needs to show Ontario a plan that fixes the one (former Liberal leader) Kathleen Wynne messed up." "As Ontario's official Opposition, we will work closely with municipalities, stakeholders, and community members to push the Ford Conservatives to roll out legal cannabis sales in Ontario in a way that promotes social responsibility and community safety, while effectively ending demand for illegal sales," New Democrat Gilles Bisson said in a statement.

The Green Party, meanwhile, said the province should adopt a model similar to the craft brewery industry, in which small businesses and dispensaries would



AMAZING SPECIALS
ALL TIRES • BRAKES • BATTERIES
MENTION THIS AD FOR GREAT SAVINGS!

Summer Maintenance Packages

FROM \$99.95
REG. 187.00

SALE ON ALL TIRES

Call our Tire Department at 905-668-4792

www.whitbytoyota.com
 1025 Dundas Street West, Whitby, ON L1P 1Z1
 Toll Free 1-877-686-2228 • Fax 905-430-7874



TOYOTA TIRE CENTRE

	TAUNTON RD.
SALEM RD.	Whitby TOYOTA HWY2
LAKERIDGE RD.	HWY 401



Here is how to reach us

**By mail: 136 Simcoe St North, Unit 4
 Oshawa, Ontario. L1G 4S7
 Tel: (905) 432-2657**

**Administration (General Inquiries)
 Tel: (905) 432-2605 Circulation
 Tel: (905) 432-9987**

**Classified/Display Advertising
 Tel: (905) 432-9989**

**News Tips And Information
 or Fax: (905) 404-0887
 Our Email Address is:
 newspaper@ocentral.com
 Our On line address is:
 URL <http://www.ocentral.com>**

We publish every Monday.

At The Oshawa Central Newspaper we understand the growing public concern for the environment. We do our part by forecasting the demand of the papers published, based on our sales performance records. By forecasting the quantities we are able to determine the amount required to publish. This way we eliminate recycling and assure that everyone that receives a copy will want one to read. Any Newspapers that are not sold are delivered throughout the City on a promotional basis. In most cases the free papers will be a day or two old. If you want Oshawa's Number One Newspaper delivered to your door on time every Monday do your part and subscribe today, like the many of your neighbors. If you like to pick up a copy. They are available in most local stores.

Oshawa's first On Line (Internet) Newspaper

LET HIM DO HIS JOB WE DO FLYERS THAT MUCH BETTER...

Durham's TRUSTED Flyer Distributor

ONE LOW RATE ANY QUANTITY ANYWHERE IN DURHAM

905-432-2657

WE BEAT OR MATCH ANY COMPETITORS RATE

FROM 8¢

