

Privatize Liquor Stores?

Why Risk it?

More liquor stores ... more crime

After Alberta privatized liquor retailing in 1993, the number of liquor outlets expanded rapidly.

By 2002, there were three times as many liquor stores in the province. (BCGEU 2002)

In Calgary, liquor stores increased by a staggering 620 per cent, from 29 in 1993 to 209 in 2002.

(Liquor Stores and Crime, Calgary Police Service, 2003)

Alcohol-related crime skyrocketed in Alberta after liquor sales were privatized.

Edmonton police reported a 164 per cent increase in alcohol-related charges between 1993 and 1999. By comparison, drug-related charges increased only seven per cent in the same period. (BCGEU 2002)

When the number of liquor stores in Brooks, Alberta grew from one to 12, robberies increased by 250 per cent, and liquor act offences increased from 547 to 974, according to the Brooks RCMP. (BCGEU 2002)

A threat to neighbourhood safety

Increased numbers of liquor stores can degrade neighbourhoods.

Research shows that communities may experience "littering, loitering, harassment and intimidation of pedestrians and customers, public urination, drug dealing and prostitution" as a result of a concentration of liquor retailers.

(Liquor Stores and Crime, Calgary Police Service, 2003)

The growth of private liquor stores leads to more crime and social problems, since these businesses tend to stay open late at night and typically do not have the same level of security provided by large, busy government-operated stores.

(Liquor Stores and Crime, Calgary Police Service, 2003)

More harm to families and communities

Alcohol is not just another consumer product. It is a drug that creates serious problems and so sales should remain under public control.

Harm caused by alcohol in Canada in 2002 cost \$14.6 billion, or \$463 for every Canadian.

(National Alcohol Strategy Working Group, 2007)

The explosion of new liquor stores resulting from privatization makes liquor more available, which means more drinking. Research shows that greater access to alcohol leads to increased consumption, which in turn leads to greater social harm. (Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, 2004)

Less Control

Private liquor retailers are more likely to sell alcohol to those who shouldn't have it.

The need to make a profit may pressure owners "into selling to underage youth."

(Liquor Stores and Crime, Calgary Police Service, 2003)

Good reasons why ...

Saskatchewan liquor stores should **stay** publicly-owned

Publicly-run liquor stores help ensure safe and healthy communities

The Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority (SLGA) is committed to the socially responsible sale of alcohol. SLGA employees check IDs of anyone who looks under the age of 25, and are trained to deal with minors and intoxicated individuals.

Public liquor stores are secure and well-maintained

There's little need to worry about liquor store break-ins and run-down liquor stores when those retail outlets are publicly run. Saskatchewan families and communities appreciate the cleanliness and professional management of SLGA stores, customer surveys show.

Public liquor stores generate revenue that government uses to fund services like health and education.

Liquor sales contributed \$161.5 million to our province in 2006-07. This money can be directed to health care, education and other important public services that help address the social harm created by alcohol consumption.

Public liquor stores provide good jobs with decent wages — enhancing the well-being of our communities.

Public liquor stores create good jobs for Saskatchewan people. That's important to the economic well-being of our families and our communities. Public liquor stores employ 900 staff in 64 communities. Almost half are located in rural areas, and the majority of these workers are women. Many rural families rely on jobs like these to supplement farm income.

After privatization in Alberta, wages of liquor store employees were reduced by half. (Douglas West. *The Privatization of Liquor Retailing in Alberta*, Public Policy Sources, 1997)

There is a strong connection between privatized liquor sales and social harm. Keeping liquor stores in public hands allows us to keep some control over alcohol in our communities. SLGA makes social responsibility a priority.

Keeping Saskatchewan families safe and healthy should be our number one concern.

A message from the women and men who work in Saskatchewan government liquor stores.



SGEU