



Issued: June 7, 2022

BCVMC BULLETIN: What We Heard - April 12th Townhall Report Invitation For Written Submissions

What We Heard – Townhall Feedback

On April 12th the BC Vegetable Marketing Commission held its first townhall meeting.

Participants provided feedback on:

1. Advisory Groups
2. Election Policy
3. Food Safety Compliance & Enforcement
4. Agency Accountability
5. Challenges To Recruit Commissioners In The Current Environment
6. Grower Engagement

Attached is a copy of the What We Heard Report (FILE: [What We Heard - Townhall April 12 2022.pdf](#)). The next townhall will be held in October 2022. Details on this October session will be provided closer to this date.

Invitation For Written Feedback

Submissions are DUE: Thu. June 30th, 2022

The BCVMC is inviting written submissions on specific questions that were asked on the topics presented at the April 2022 townhall session. The '[What We Heard - Townhall April 12 2022.pdf](#)' report summarizes the feedback that was received from participants. The Commission is now inviting all stakeholders to provide additional written feedback on the topics that were discussed.

The three topics are:

TOPIC A: 2023-27 Election Policy

TOPIC B: Food Safety and Compliance Enforcement

TOPIC C: Agency Accountability

Background information and questions on each of these topics are provided below. All feedback will be summarized into a what we heard document and brought forward to the Greenhouse Vegetable and Storage Vegetable Advisories for further discussion. Submissions are to be sent to bcvmc.chair@bcveg.com by 5PM Thu. June 30th. If you have any questions, please contact the Commission office at 604.542.9734 or reply to claudia@bcveg.com.

TOPIC A: 2023-27 Election Policy

The 2023-27 election policy (attached file: [2023-27 VMC Election Policy Draft.pdf](#)) has been drafted to add greater clarity and includes the following key changes:

- Elimination of district and crop type representation. Commercial producers are elected to three (3) greenhouse at large and (3) storage crop at large member positions.
- A formal election policy review is extended from 3-years to every 5-years.
- Member terms are extended from 2-year to 3-year staggered terms.
- Adoption of the interim merit-based independent commissioner appointment process as the permanent policy.

NOTE:

The 2023-27 drafted election policy adopts the BCFIRB directive that producers who are agency directors may not serve as commissioners. However, the Commission has considered the feedback received from the townhall session and will continue to assess the impact of this restriction and engage the industry in discussion. If election policy amendments that address this restriction are warranted, the Commission will consult with BCFIRB and can initiate a review of the election policy prior to the scheduled 5-year review.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the pros and cons of not having agency directors being eligible to sit on the Commission? Are there other ways that we can ensure the voice of this segment of the industry is heard to inform the work of the BCVMC?
2. Do you have concerns about both district and greenhouse crop specific representation sub-categories being removed? What are they?
3. Is it necessary and effective to place restrictions on elected commissioner positions to ensure representation across agencies and avoid concentration of commissioners that market through the same designated agency?
4. Many industries have moved to online voting to support access and ease of participation. What are the pros and cons of voting on-line? Are you in favour of online voting?
5. Are there any other amendments to the 2023-07 draft election policy documents that should be considered? (See attached file: [2023-27 VMC Election Policy Draft.pdf](#))

TOPIC B: Food Safety and Compliance Enforcement

- The BCFIRB developed an “Administrative Penalties Framework for Commodity Boards” (Framework) and finalized this Framework on May 19, 2021.
- Under the authority permitted in the Natural Products Marketing Act (NPMA) and within the Framework developed by BCFIRB, fines up to \$10,0000 (Administrative penalties) can be used by the BCVMC to encourage swift compliance to food safety (biosecurity) programs by producers.
- The Grower Marketing Agreement (GMA) between a producer and an agency require that the producer commit to a recognized third party audited certification program.
- The BCVMC now needs to determine if it plans to make food safety (biosecurity) programs mandatory in the General Order and utilize administrative penalties as a suitable graduated enforcement tool for mandatory food safety (biosecurity) programs.

QUESTIONS:

1. What are the pros and cons of making food safety certification a requirement for market access in the BCVMC General Orders?
2. How will the adoption of admin penalties for food safety (biosecurity) programs impact the industry? Would this impact be desirable or harmful?
3. What would the graduated enforcement process look like?
4. Are there certain food safety (biosecurity) programs the Commission should make mandatory, based on a food safety risk assessment to regulated vegetables?

TOPIC C: Agency Accountability

- An Agency Review Report issued July 2020 provided the Commission with an understanding on how each agency is currently functioning in accordance with its overarching purpose and mandate, and assessed opportunities for improvement in monitoring accountability and agency performance.
- A moderated workshop was held in October 2020 to have further dialogue, understanding and clarity on agency governance & corporate structure, and a requirements framework on criteria for becoming and maintaining an agency. A report was issued in February 2021.
- A BCFIRB vegetable supervisory decision was issued in December 2020 that provided decisions and recommendations on:
 - a) What should an agency accountability framework include?
 - b) How should an agency accountability framework be used?
- In March 2021 the BCVMC issued Amending Order No. 54: Part XIV PART XIV – Procedures For Designation Of Agencies. This is the foundation on which agency accountability compliance standards and reporting is to be developed.

QUESTIONS:

1. What do you expect an agency to do for you?
2. What are your concerns about agencies?
3. What do you need, to be assured that agencies are acting in your best interest? And, in the best interests of the regulated industry?