



September 26, 2022

The Honourable Lana Popham, M.L.A.
Minister of Agriculture and Food
PO Box 9043 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria BC
V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Popham;

I am writing you today to ask that you consider the creation of a new agricultural commodity board within the regulated marketing system in BC for the Greenhouse Vegetable sector.

The proliferation of reviews, hearings, appeals and allegations of bad faith and unlawful activity involving the current commodity board in the last few years, as well as the associated legal actions highlights the need to revisit the policy of having the Field Storage crops and the Greenhouse Vegetable crops under the same umbrella organization, the BC Vegetable Marketing Commission (BCVMC).

There are no similarities between Field Storage crops and Greenhouse Vegetable crops. Production methods, types of produce grown, methods of sales and exposure to external market forces are widely dissimilar. Yet, for many years the decisions that affect each industry are partially or wholly decided by individuals with little or no knowledge and experience in the subject industry.

Regulated Greenhouse Vegetable crops, in aggregate, are in the top five, by Farm Gate Sales, of regulated agriculture products in British Columbia and yet are without their own Marketing Board or Commission.

Allegations of “vote swapping” and “coffee shop deals” brought forward during a recent review were not found to be credible by the BC Farm Industry Review Board (BC FIRB). However, these allegations have been floating around for some time and will not go away nor will the very real risk that it could happen. The only way to achieve decisions and create policies that will enhance the two respective industries is to have two separate boards comprised of growers and qualified outside directors, each focused on the real needs and unique situations of their specific board, its’ growers and sales agencies.

In the past, the reason given for maintaining this inherently dysfunctional structure was to remove the appearance of bias by having decisions made by Commissioners from the “other” crop group. This makes no sense whatsoever, given those Commissioners’ lack of knowledge and experience with the “other” crop.

I propose an amended scheme that creates the “Regulated Greenhouse Vegetable Growers of British Columbia (RGVGBC”).

This new entity would develop policies, ensure compliance and enhance the regulated greenhouse vegetable sector, working under the supervision of the BC FIRB.

The BC Greenhouse Sector already has the BC Greenhouse Growers’ Association (BCGGA), which also represents growers of unregulated greenhouse vegetable crops. In order to achieve efficiencies with the BCGGA and the newly established RGVGBC a new combined board of directors could be created. There could be a sub-committee of the growers of regulated greenhouse vegetable crops with representatives drawn from that group of

growers. This sub committee would have to be comprised of growers from at least three different Marketing Agencies.

Production Allocation would be reviewed by this sub committee and recommended with Agency approval; however, the final say on contentious issues would be held by BC FIRB.

Agency reviews and compliance would be handled by this sub committee, as well as new Agency applications to ensure Grower agreement, however again, BC FIRB would have the final decision.

Currently there is so much duplication of efforts between the BCGGA and the BCVMC, with this new structure I believe we can move our industry to the next level and continue to actively compete in the North American marketplace.

These are just some suggestions on how to structure this new Regulated Greenhouse Vegetable Growers of British Columbia (RGVGBC"). I, together with our Board of Directors look forward to meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss a structure that works for all parties. We are eager and excited to start working together to make this happen.

We look forward to receiving some meeting options from you. We are available to meet in either the Lower Mainland or Victoria, as we feel that a face-to-face meeting would be the most effective.

Yours Sincerely;



Armand Vander Meulen
Chair, BC Greenhouse Growers' Association