



August 14, 2019

File: 0280-30

Ref: 190746

Brad Sperling, Chair and Board Members
Peace River Regional District
1981 Alaska Avenue
Dawson Creek BC V1G 4H8

Dear Mr. Sperling:

Over the past several months, the Ministry of Agriculture (AGRI), the Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources (EMPR) and the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) have been working to update the terms of the Farmers' Advocacy Office, renamed the Farmers Information Service (FIS).

AGRI has committed to holding the administrative function of the office, including coordinating the RFP process to solicit a contractor and, subsequently, holding the contract with the successful candidate. In addition, AGRI and EMPR have committed to contributing funding to FIS.

AGRI is formally requesting that PRRD continue to support FIS going forward. Specifically, we are requesting:

1. That PRRD continue to remain engaged in supporting the FIS, and commit to the attached MOU as a member of the FIS Management Committee.
2. That PRRD continue to contribute financially to the office. We are suggesting EMPR, AGRI, and PRRD cost share FIS in an equal annual allocation not to exceed \$60,000 per organization (for a total FIS cost not to exceed \$180,000 annually).
3. That PRRD continue to provide the administrative support to the Management Committee including providing a minute taker and a physical space for quarterly management committee meetings.

Once the interim FIS can be re-launched, AGRI and EMPR are committed to working in conjunction with PRRD to continue to explore a long term model for FIS.

Sincerely,

W.H. (Wes) Shoemaker, MBA
Deputy Minister

Ministry of Agriculture
BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR MEETING WITH
ALAIN BRANDON, VICE PRESIDENT OF GOVERNMENT RELATIONS FOR LOBLAWS

Ref: 190753

Date: August 12, 2019

Title: Buy BC Retail Partnership

Issue: Explore opportunities to expand the Buy BC retail partnership program to Loblaws.

Background:

- A strategic priority for the Ministry of Agriculture (Ministry or AGRI) is the promotion of Buy BC.
- The overarching goal of Buy BC is to increase consumer awareness, demand and domestic sales of local agriculture and seafood products by building and leveraging a strong, recognizable Buy BC brand that helps consumers recognize and seek out British Columbia products.
- A Buy BC marketing program has been established to target all consumers across the province and includes the following key components:
 - Brand communication, local food literacy and promotional activities;
 - Buy BC: Eat Drink Local campaign; and
 - The Buy BC Partnership Program.
- The Buy BC Partnership Program has a Buy BC logo licensing component which makes it easy for consumers to identify and support B.C.'s agriculture and seafood products.
- Buy BC Logo Licensing provides the retail industry with the opportunity to apply for authorization to use the Buy BC logo through the *Authorized Use Agreement for Marketing*.
- The *Authorized Use Agreement for Marketing* enables retailers to use the Buy BC logo on marketing/promotional materials to increase appreciation, awareness and support for B.C. agriculture and food products across the province.
- In June 2019, Thrifty Foods (a division of Sobeys Canada) became the first retail partner to prominently feature the Buy BC brand in all of its Vancouver Island stores.
- The partnership agreement with Thrifty's included the Ministry providing Point-of-Sale (POS) signage for 25 stores. In return, Thrifty Foods hosted a "Reach for BC" event and launch of Buy BC at one of their newest locations. The partnership agreement is in place until December 2019.
- Over the summer of 2019, the Buy BC brand has been promoted through a comprehensive advertising campaign, at Thrifty Foods stores, and on Buy BC certified products.
- Retail partnerships align with AGRI's 2019/20 – 2021/22 Service Plan objective to help producers and processors expand sales and ensure consumers can easily identify local food and beverages.
- AGRI is in the process of finalizing another partnership with Sobeys Canada to launch the Buy BC brand at 49 Safeway stores across B.C. through POS signage/materials. Through this partnership, Safeway will also be hosting a "Reach for BC" event featuring Buy BC licensees at a Vancouver location on September 20, 2019.

Discussion:

- Loblaw Companies Limited (Loblaws) is Canada's largest food retailer, owned by Canadian food processing and distribution company George Weston Limited, headquartered in Brampton, Ontario.
- Loblaws operates a more than 220 grocery stores in the province, including Extra Foods, Independent Grocers, No Frills, Wholesale Club, Real Canadian Superstore, and Shoppers Drug Mart.
- With the extensive reach of Loblaws stores in B.C., there is an opportunity to greatly enhance the visibility of Buy BC through a partnership agreement.

- Loblaws is committed to a Canadian-first buying approach, which gives priority to local and regional vendors, when their fresh products meet safety, quality, availability and value standards. The company has been using this approach since its inception in 1919 and continues to take pride helping local producers/farmers reach their potential in local communities. These values, at the provincial level, align directly with the Buy BC objectives.
- Integrating Buy BC into Loblaws stores would provide greater visibility for Loblaws as a leader in providing local products to consumers. As a corporation, Loblaw currently purchases more than \$500 million annually from Canadian growers.
- AGRI staff are currently working on various levels of engagement for retail partners as part of the Buy BC marketing program. These include three tiers of retail partnership:
 - Tier 1: At a very basic level, involves distribution of promotional items to increase brand awareness of the Buy BC logo with no additional commitment;
 - Tier 2: Includes a short-term partnership for 3-6 months to promote Buy BC through events and activities (AGRI provides POS materials to stores); and,
 - Tier 3: Includes a long-term partnership for up to a year with option to renew to promote Buy BC through events and activities on a more detailed level.
- Within the Loblaws stores three company brands are represented: President's Choice, No Name and Life Brand. There may be an opportunity for B.C. companies to produce goods under these banners.
- Of the stores owned by Loblaws across B.C., the highest density are found in the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, the Okanagan and the Cariboo.
- Due to their wide range of retail locations across B.C. with a focus from discount to specialty, Loblaws can promote B.C. products to multiple audiences.
- Loblaws is a key contributor to the Foodland Ontario program. As such, they may be open to participating in the Buy BC program.

Suggested Response:

- Retail partnerships complement the Buy BC initiative to strengthen B.C.'s agriculture and seafood sector and expand the domestic market for B.C. food and beverage products.
- The recommended next step, with Minister's approval, is to engage in discussions with Loblaws for options of a potential retail partnership.

Contact: Kevin Grout, 778-974-3781

DIR/MGR KG ED EBH A/ADM EBH DM _____