

Join the Discussion:

The New Manitoba Liquor and Gaming Authority

Consultations are being held during September 2012 to give the public and stakeholder groups the opportunity to provide input on a new framework for alcohol and gaming regulation in Manitoba. We are asking you to share your ideas on how to reduce red tape, improve consumer choice and enhance public safety and social responsibility.

Combining Regulatory Services

As announced in the 2012 Manitoba Budget, regulatory services for alcohol and gaming will be combined into a single agency. To achieve this, new legislation and regulation is needed to amalgamate the [Manitoba Gaming Control Commission \(MGCC\)](#) with the [Manitoba Liquor Control Commission's \(MLCC\)](#) Regulatory Services Division. The integration of these complementary regulatory agencies presents a unique opportunity for citizens to share their views on the options and opportunities for the development of the new Manitoba Liquor and Gaming Authority (MLGA).

New legislation will be introduced in spring 2013 and Manitobans are invited to provide their input during consultations to be held beginning in September, with a particular focus on ways to:

- modernize the liquor licensing and permit structure originally established in 1956;
- integrate the complementary regulatory services for gaming which were established in 1997;
- identify functional efficiencies to streamline and combine services; and
- build on social responsibility and public safety initiatives.

Seeking a Balance

Manitobans are generally accepting of alcohol and gaming as part of a social occasion, entertainment option or hospitality event. Over the years, they have also become sensitive to health impacts and increasingly intolerant of over consumption, access by minors and drinking and driving. Recognizing the need to balance the diverse interests and perspectives of individuals, businesses and community groups, the province is seeking Manitobans' advice and input on key themes through these three questions:

1. Reducing Red Tape - How can we reduce red tape to modernize the licensing, permit, registration and inspections processes, improve flexibility and reduce the administrative burden for businesses, charities and occasional permit holders while balancing public expectations for public safety and regulatory oversight?
2. Responding to Consumer Choice - What steps do we need to take to develop a regulatory system that acknowledges consumer choice and responsibility, recognizes the province's increasingly diverse culture and builds on Manitoba's 2011 Hospitality Strategy?
3. Enhancing Public Safety and Social Responsibility – How can we build on Manitoba's multi-dimensional public safety and harm prevention framework that includes tough drinking and driving laws, discourages over consumption, encourages informed decision making and facilitates community input?

Some Background

Since *The Liquor Control Act* was proclaimed in the late 1950s, public acceptance of alcohol has evolved from prohibition and restriction to acceptance and tolerance. Over more than 50 years a number of amendments have been made to adapt to cultural shifts, revamp services and add social responsibility. Nevertheless, the foundation of the current legislation is framed within the historical context of morality and prohibition

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rather than modern expectations for consumer choice and personal responsibility. As noted in the document, the [History of Liquor Regulation in Manitoba](#), “much has changed in the way we buy, sell, consume and regulate liquor, just as our own societal attitudes have evolved.” The current consultations are intended to give Manitobans the opportunity to join in the discussions and provide their views on how to modernize the legislative framework and integrate liquor regulation within the Manitoba Gaming Control Commission’s regulatory framework.

As a parallel to the historical document on liquor in Manitoba, [the History of Gaming Regulation in Manitoba](#) shows how our attitudes have shifted and gaming has evolved since the Criminal Code (Canada) authorized the conduct and management of gaming activities in 1969. (It should be noted that The Gaming Control Act was proclaimed about 40 years after the current *Liquor Control Act* originally came into force.) Since the MGCC was established in 1997, its legislation has been twice amended to strengthen accountability, enshrine dispute resolution and social responsibility and expand oversight for operations. Arguably, the original development of this legislation benefitted from legislative and regulatory lessons learned since the 1950s. Therefore, it’s not surprising that this Act and accompanying regulation, take a more modern and practical regulatory approach to registration, approvals and licensing. As such, this discussion paper focuses on liquor regulation.

2011 Hospitality Strategy

Significant updates and amendments were made to *The Liquor Control Act* in 2011 as part of Manitoba’s [New Hospitality Strategy](#) which consisted of over 40 different initiatives focussed on hospitality opportunities, red tape reduction, greater public safety and wellbeing and countermeasures to underage drinking.

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Reducing Red Tape and Responding to Consumer Choice:

Hospitality Strategy Results

- Multi-year licences mean businesses now hold licences for up to three years before renewal.
- Keeping the rules simple and fair by standardizing the closing time of 2:00 a.m., seven days a week for all licensed premises and occasional permit events. That means cabarets and beverage rooms no longer need to close at midnight on Sunday nights, and socials, weddings and charity fundraisers are able to serve liquor for an additional hour.
- Instead of all 1,600 liquor licences expiring in March, anniversary dates are now based on the original licence date to ease and speed renewal transactions.
- Licensing fees are now pro-rated according to the month a business opens.
- The liquor licence application process was streamlined by eliminating the requirement to publish notices for new licences in the Manitoba Gazette.
- Licensees no longer need to submit quarterly food and liquor reports. Instead, there is greater reliance on more effective practices, such as spot checks, complaint investigations and licensee record maintenance.
- New regulations allow licensees to advertise outside on their premises.
- Later this year, Manitobans will be able to apply for social permits through the MLCC website. The MLCC will also introduce an Internet portal for commercial business partners.
- Modernizing services to better respond to consumer and tourist preferences, evolving retail operations and Manitoba's increasingly diverse culture.
- Introduction of up to ten, limited selection Liquor Mart Express stores in high-traffic areas, including up to five locations within urban grocery stores. These outlets will feature some of the most popular wines, beers and spirits in the province, including products unique to Manitoba; all while providing more convenience for customers. The first was at the Arrivals Terminal of the new Winnipeg James A. Richardson International Airport.

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See the full 2011 [Hospitality Strategy Scorecard](#).

Going Forward – Your Input

Manitoba's Hospitality Strategy builds on Manitoba's strengths - world-class attractions, a flourishing economy and a thriving entrepreneurial spirit. And our public safety laws are among the toughest in the country. Looking to the future, we want to build on these strengths and hospitality sector successes by modernizing Manitoba's liquor laws and creating new opportunities for economic development.

The decision to integrate the licensing, permits, registration, inspection and investigation responsibilities for liquor and gaming presents a unique opportunity to further modernize the liquor licensing and permit structure originally established in 1956. At the same time, we will integrate complementary regulatory services for gaming now held by the MGCC, which was established in 1997, and build on social responsibility and public safety initiatives for both liquor and gaming.

Recognizing the need to balance the diverse interests and perspectives of individuals, businesses and community groups, the province is seeking advice and input to continue to evolve the regulatory framework for liquor and gaming. Based on past input from stakeholders and citizens, and modernization initiatives in [other jurisdictions](#), we are aware of options and opportunities to maintain strong regulatory controls while reframing the legislative foundation to reflect our society's expectations for the 21st century.

Thinking Points

In considering your views on red tape reduction, consumer choice, social responsibility and public safety, we have prepared some "thinking points" to contemplate as options for next steps in our modernization efforts. What are your thoughts on the following?

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- Streamlining and simplifying the number of liquor licenses. Manitoba currently has 12 licence classes for “on premises” sale of alcohol. For example, currently a single business may hold separate licences for a dining room, beverage room, vendor and cocktail lounge.
- Modernizing licences for festivals, hospitality events and sports facilities. We are seeking to simplify licensing and inspections while protecting public safety, restricting under age drinking and encouraging responsible consumption.
- Allowing greater flexibility in the seating ratio for cocktail lounge/dining room licensees to permit Manitoba entrepreneurs to manage their business operations in response to their customers choices.
- Licensing wine bars and pubs in designated areas and under certain conditions to allow the hospitality industry to continue to evolve and respond to consumer choice while ensuring patron and public safety.
- Streamlining the permit system for weddings, socials and festivals to support family celebrations, cultural gatherings and community events.
- Standardizing hours for Good Friday, Easter, Christmas and Sunday and removing permit restrictions for these days.
- Exploring the live entertainment requirement for certain licence classes.

What are Your Thoughts? Tell Us

There are several ways to join the discussion...attend a meeting, take the survey or send us an email or letter.

How can we reduce red tape? How can we streamline the licensing, permit, registration and inspections processes and improve flexibility for businesses, charities and occasional permit holders?

How can we better respond to consumer needs? What should be done to improve consumer choice and responsibility, recognize the province's increasingly diverse culture and build on Manitoba's 2011 Hospitality Strategy?

How can we improve public safety and social responsibility? What are the next steps for public safety initiatives that include tough drinking and driving laws, discourage over-consumption, encourage informed decision-making and invite community input?

Liquor and Gaming Regulatory Consultation Committee

James Allum, MLA for Fort Garry-Riverview has been appointed by the province to lead the discussions with Manitobans. The other committee members are: Thomas Nevakshonoff, MLA for the Interlake; Frank Whitehead, MLA for The Pas; and Melanie Wight, MLA for Burrows.

The Committee is charged to engage Manitobans, businesses and other stakeholders to contribute their knowledge, perspectives and experiences related to the guiding principles of red tape reduction, consumer choice and social responsibility.

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Working within the principles framework and the corresponding questions, the committee will:

- Seek input via public meetings, stakeholder consultations, a web-based survey and written submissions;
- Identify themes, opportunities and challenges raised during the consultations; and
- Prepare a report on the findings for the province to inform and guide the preparation of new legislation and regulation for the new Manitoba Liquor and Gaming Authority.

Join In

- [Meet](#) with Us
- Take the [Survey](#)
- [Email](#), Fax or Write Us

Consultation Schedule

Arborg Tuesday, September 18th, 3-7 p.m.
Bifrost Community Centre, Ingolfs Street

Thompson Wednesday, September 19th, 3-7 p.m.
Thompson Golf Club

The Pas Thursday, September 20th, 3-7 p.m.
Good Thymes Restaurant, 1607 Gordon Avenue

Brandon Monday, September 24th, 2-5 and 7-9 p.m.
Victoria Inn, 3550 Victoria Avenue

Winkler Tuesday, September 25th, 3-7 p.m.
Smitty's Restaurant, 777 Norquay Drive

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Winnipeg Thursday, September 27th, 2-5 and 7-9 p.m.

Humphrey's Inn & Suites, 260 Main Street

Register in Advance:

Email: consultations@mgcc.mb.ca

Phone: 204-954-9452 in Winnipeg, or toll free 1-800-782-0363 ext. 452

Fax: 204-954-9450 in Winnipeg, or toll free 1-866-999-6688

If you can't attend a meeting, click here to:

- send us your input via [email](#)
- complete the [survey](#)
- [ask](#) for an alternative way to join in

Contact Us:

Liquor and Gaming Regulatory Consultation Committee

c/o Manitoba Gaming Control Commission

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Available in alternate formats, upon request.