

The Real Faces of Craft Cannabis

AUGUST 9, 2016



Executive Summary

We are the Craft Cannabis Association of BC, a non-profit society founded by a diverse group of cannabis advocates, consumers and producers with years of experience in the industry. We support regulations that deter the involvement of organized crime in the cannabis market.

In our experience, organized crime makes up a very small amount of those involved in the cannabis economy. It is inaccurate and unfair for the federal government to paint all people in the cannabis industry as “organized crime,” and we are concerned that this false premise will lead to the exclusion of craft cannabis from the new legal market.

We want the government’s legalization task force to know that:

We do not support organized crime

- Most cannabis users are responsible, contributing members of society who do not support organized crime.
- We make careful choices to buy cannabis products from sources that we know and trust.

We support craft cannabis producers and retailers

- We choose to support people and businesses that align with our values.
- Over the decades of prohibition, we have built community and a local craft market that provides economic opportunities and values public health and safety.

We want choice and inclusion

- We want to choose where our cannabis products come from.
- We want craft cannabis producers and retailers to be included in the legal industry so that we can continue to purchase from them in a legal framework.

We conclude our submission by presenting the real faces of craft cannabis, providing descriptions of the craft cannabis producers who supply friends and family and cannabis retailers.



Part 1: Craft Cannabis is not Organized Crime

As the federal Liberal government and its appointed task force work towards the legalization and regulation of cannabis, one of their key stated goals is to remove cannabis from the hands of organized crime.

As cannabis consumers and producers, we support the government's decision to legalize and regulate cannabis. We know organized crime exists in the cannabis industry, as it does in other industries, particularly illicit ones.¹ We would also like to see legalization reduce the involvement of organized crime in the cannabis industry.

However, in our experience, organized crime makes up a very small percentage of those involved in the cannabis economy. It is inaccurate and unfair for the federal government to paint all people in the cannabis industry as "organized crime." We are concerned that this false premise will lead to the exclusion of craft cannabis producers and retailers from the new legal market.

We are also concerned that if the new regulatory framework excludes craft producers and retailers, who currently provide consumers with choice, quality and affordable products, there will actually be more room for organized crime to fill this gap. This would directly contradict the stated aims of the federal government and be a detriment to the creation of a healthy legal cannabis industry.

As the government develops regulations for the legalization of cannabis, we want the government to know that:

We do not support organized crime

Most cannabis consumers are responsible members of society who do not support organized crime. We believe we are making an intelligent choice to use cannabis because it benefits our health and well-being. We also believe we are making smart choices about where we acquire our cannabis. We choose good cannabis grown by good people.

We make careful choices to buy cannabis products from sources that we know and trust. In the challenging context of prohibition, it has been left to

¹ Source: http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/csj-sjc/jsp-sjp/rr05_5/p3.html



individuals' personal ethics and their abilities to vet who they are purchasing cannabis from.

Legalization can help us ensure consumers are not supporting organized crime.

We support craft producers and retailers

We choose to support the people and businesses that align with our values. The men and women who have produced and supplied us with cannabis are hardworking, decent people. We know who they are. They are our friends and neighbours. They are valued members of our communities. They are not organized crime. They do not use threats and violence.

We appreciate our cannabis producers and retailers. They have taken risks to provide us with products that we value greatly. Over decades of an ill-conceived prohibition, we have built community and a local craft market that provides economic opportunities and values public health and safety.

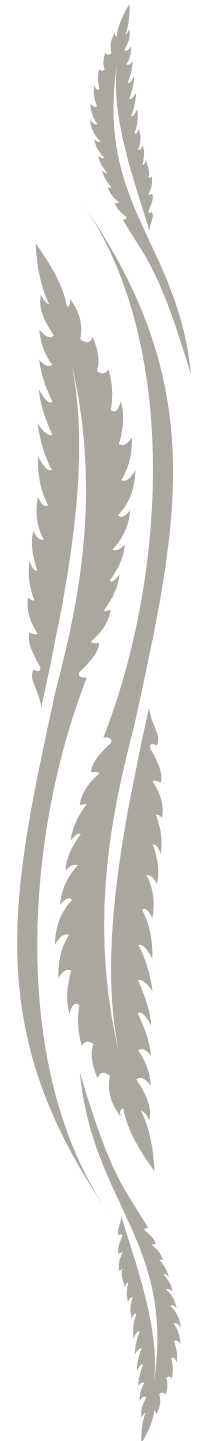
Legalization should acknowledge this community and the value that the craft market brings to local economies.

We want choice and inclusion of craft cannabis

We support regulations that deter the involvement of organized crime in the cannabis market.

As the consumers upon whom the new legal cannabis industry depends, we want to choose where our cannabis products come from. We want to make intelligent, responsible and legal choices. We want craft producers and retailers to be included so that we can continue to purchase from them within a legal framework.

Craft producers and retailers wish to be part of the legal industry and are willing to meet reasonable standards of safety and quality. We do not want the federal government to exclude them based on the unfounded notion that these people are members of "organized crime." Rather, legalization should acknowledge and include the entrepreneurs who have built this industry as well as those who would like to join it.



Part 2: The Real Faces of Craft Cannabis

It is easy to have false images of cannabis producers because they have been operating underground during the era of prohibition. In this gap, the image that has been painted by the media has been dominated by that of organized crime. We want to illuminate the real faces of the craft cannabis cultivators and processors² who service their friends and family and local retailers, for medical and elective use, so that we can dispel this incorrect portrayal.

Production for personal use and extended network: These cultivators and processors specialize in small batch craft cannabis and/or craft cannabis derived products. They have developed skill and expertise working with select strains and focusing on quality. Many find the act of growing therapeutic. They are often patients who grow and/or process cannabis for themselves, their friends and family, and they may share with their extended community. There is generally little to no profit involved.

Production for retailers: These skilled producers operate on a larger scale providing quality product through a variety of cannabis retailers. In the past, most were medical cannabis dispensaries serving patients with documentation of medical conditions. Some, like the BC Compassion Club Society (BCCCS), require an exclusivity contract with producers chosen because they are reasonable, honest and kind people. Through such contracts, the dispensaries enjoy the reliability of product and the ability to work closely with producers. The producers enjoy assisting people who require cannabis as medicine, as well as the procurement security the dispensary provides. Today, there are retailers selling to adults for elective use. They operate much the same as medical cannabis dispensaries, except that proof of age is the sole documentation required. Other producers work with a middle-person (“dealer”), who fills a gap where the consumer is unable to purchase from friends, family or retailers.

Some producers have MMAR licenses for personal production or designated production, others may be MMPR patients, and others have no authorization. Most producers look forward to working in a legal economy. In the meantime, these people feel it necessary to keep their identities hidden for fear of persecution.



² Processors use cannabis to make concentrates, infusions and extractions to be used in products such as hashish, tincture, cooking oils, capsules, edibles and topical creams.

The following are more detailed descriptions of some of these producers to provide a better idea of who they really are:

Cultivator 1: Male, mid-50s, living in rural Okanagan, BC. He had Polio from a young age and used cannabis to help mitigate his illness. He wanted to help others in need so he decided to approach a medical cannabis dispensary. He signed a contract that began an almost 10 year relationship of him supplying them with high grade organic medicine below market value. He used the proceeds to fund a camp for differently abled children who didn't have access to outdoor activities due to their illnesses or to venues that could accommodate their needs. A fly-over by the RCMP noticed his outdoor garden and subsequently raided it. This was a great loss to the patients at the dispensary. Due to a lack of funds, he also had to close down the children's camp.

Cultivator 2: Male in his early 40s, lives on the Gulf Islands, BC. He has been a producer for a medical cannabis dispensary for 3 years. His father was diagnosed with stage 3 colon cancer. Because they lived in a small community with no access to cannabis, he decided to grow cannabis and juice it for his father. He started supplying a cannabis dispensary because he saw the benefit it had for his father's health and wanted to supply more people. In combination with traditional western medicine, his father has been maintaining his health.

Cultivator 3: Male, late 60s, rural Sunshine Coast, BC. He decided to try cannabis to help with chronic insomnia. When he realized how well it worked, he began to cultivate it himself for his own use and found he had a green thumb. He began to produce more cannabis than he needed, so he submitted a sample to a medical cannabis dispensary. That was 15 years ago and the strain he produces remains to this day one of the top 3 strains at the dispensary. He has no plans to stop what he's doing despite having been recently raided by the RCMP.

Cultivator 4: Female, early 30s. She lives in the Kootenay region of BC and started growing cannabis to help pay off her substantial student loans. She has a strong interest in organic growing and sustainability. She supplies local cannabis retailers with high quality, small batch cannabis and hopes to produce organic cannabis grown in greenhouses in the future.





Cultivator 5: Male, 50s, married with 4 children. He is a seasonal worker in the fishing industry. He has put his 2 eldest children through college and university with earnings from cannabis cultivation for a medical cannabis dispensary in BC.

Cultivator 6: Male, late 60s. He is a retired professional living in rural BC, supplementing his pension income with funds from a small, organic outdoor crop. He began growing for his own medical needs but soon found a steady clientele amongst his friends and neighbours. He occasionally sells surplus product to cannabis dispensaries in the local area.

Cultivator 7: Female, late 40s. Lives on a hobby farm in central BC and uses cannabis cultivation supplied to a medical cannabis dispensary to supplement her income.

Cultivator 8: Male, 60s, Sunshine Coast, BC. A former professor, he produces small amounts of cannabis for a medical cannabis dispensary to supplement his pension.

Cultivator 9: Female, mid 30s. This single mother has been working part-time in the hospitality industry and growing her own medicine for over a decade. Recently, she has been able to share her high quality sungrown organically grown cannabis with a few cannabis retailers in BC.

Cultivator 10: Male, early 40s. He obtained a degree in botany and has been working with a medical cannabis dispensary in BC for the past 18 years, charging below market value. His product is one of the most affordable provided by the dispensary, and he donates excess product for low income patients.

Cultivator 11: Two males, late 30s, living in BC. They began operating a medical cannabis dispensary in Vancouver and from there moved on to cultivation. They supply dispensaries in many parts of Canada. They engage in thorough testing regiments to ensure product quality. They also supply patients in need with many forms of cannabis medicine at low or no cost to the patients.



Cultivator 12: Male, married, in his early 40s. Lives on Vancouver Island. This producer has been providing dispensaries with cannabis for over a decade. He has had success working with the patients of these dispensaries to find and create strains that work for particular conditions and hopes to be able to continue this type of genetic work.

Cultivator 13: Female, married with 2 children. Lives on Vancouver Island. This mother works full-time and cultivates cannabis outdoors in the summer for personal use. Her harvest lasts her the year, and any extra is gifted to family and friends.

Processor 1: Female, late 30s, living in BC. She provided cannabis-infused edibles to family and friends in need, and to one dispensary in BC for some time before completing her Bachelor of Commerce degree and taking the leap to start her own business. She takes pride in her product, and her list of clientele continues to grow. She works part time in her community and is able to make ends meet with current sales volume.

Processor 2: Female, early 50s. She is a master gardener and herbalist living on Vancouver Island, in BC. She is on disability after an infection following surgery 5 years ago. She makes tinctures and salves according to a particular client's needs and sells them out of her house, though she is hoping to make available through a local cannabis retailer soon.

Processor 3: Female, early 40s. Single mother, underemployed health care professional, living in the interior of BC in a rural area. Using trim material from local producers, she crafts topicals and tinctures for friends and family. She chooses only quality, organic materials and focuses on discovering new symbiotic blends. She hopes to launch a brand in the next year.

Processor 4: Female, married with 2 children. Lives in the interior of BC. The organic creams she developed for her baby became a major hit with other mothers, so she expanded her line to include cannabis produced by a trusted neighbour and now has a retail business that supplements her family's income.

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