

March 21, 2023

Office of the Minister
Environment & Protected Areas
224 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

RE: Community Spaces Grant application by Barrhead Wellness Connection

Dear Minister Savage,

On March 14, Council heard from Evan Jamieson, President, Alberta Weekly Newspapers Association. Mr. Jamieson highlighted what impact changes to the EPR program would have on newspaper media.

The newspaper industry is already under extreme financial pressure due to increased costs of materials and inflation coupled with the decline in advertising spend and subscriptions. It might seem simple to discontinue physical publications in a digital world; however, digital excludes entire demographics of individuals who cannot access the internet. Newspapers serve as a source of information for those who still operate in an analogue world. A newspaper shuttering its doors due to additional expenses, will cut an entire demographic off from access to local, national, and international news.

We urge the UPC to follow in the footsteps of jurisdictions such as Great Britain and Ontario where newspapers have become exempt from similar EPR programs. Newspapers have multiple uses, offering a secondary purpose aside from providing information about the world. Among other uses, they are conducive as insulation for temperature sensitive products during transport and protect precious family heirlooms during a move. We urge you to recognize the importance of local papers and the impact the potential closure newspaper businesses would have on the social fabric of the communities they serve. Consider the challenges already faced. Follow in the footsteps of the Ontario government, and please exempt newspapers from the revised EPR program.

Regards,



Dave McKenzie
Mayor

cc: Glen van Dijken, MLA Westlock-Peace River
Alberta Municipalities
All Alberta Municipalities