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Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union

# NEWS RELEASE

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## SGEU adds its support for publicly-owned pot retailer

The Saskatchewan government needs to accept the results of its own online survey, which attracted almost 35,000 responses, and begin planning for a publicly-owned retailer to sell marijuana in the province, according to SGEU.

In answer to the question “who should sell retail cannabis,” 45% of respondents favoured a “government run retailer (similar to the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority).” Support for a publicly-owned retailer was substantially higher than for any of the privately-owned options.

“Support for a government-run marijuana retailer makes perfect sense in the context of how the public responded to other questions in the survey,” said SGEU President Bob Bymo. “People’s highest priority was preventing children and youth from accessing marijuana, and they overwhelmingly emphasized the importance of training requirements for retail store staff. The Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority (SLGA) is a model of high training standards and responsible selling practices, and a government-run retailer would bring similar expertise to the sale of marijuana.”

Bymo adds that a publicly-owned pot retailer would generate funds that could offset the tens of millions of dollars in annual public revenue that Saskatchewan is giving up through the privatization of SLGA liquor stores.

“This is an excellent opportunity for government to gain a new revenue stream. It will bring them closer to a balanced budget, without having to make more harmful cuts to public services,” said Bymo.

SGEU is disappointed with the reaction of Justice Minister Don Morgan, who is ignoring the survey results and sticking to earlier comments that government doesn’t want to be in the marijuana retailing business.

“This government has an ideologically-driven opposition to a public retailer, but their own survey shows that Saskatchewan people feel otherwise,” said Bymo. “Now, the minister responsible is scrambling for an excuse to ignore what the public wants.”

“A government-run marijuana retailer can serve Saskatchewan very well in terms of ensuring safe, responsible, high-quality service, and generating much-needed public revenue for the province. The people who took the time to participate in the survey recognize that. It’s time for the provincial government to recognize it too.”

*Bob Bymoan will be available for comment on this issue throughout the day.*

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