

June 15, 2007

Dr. Donald Savoie  
Building Sartain MacDonald  
Suite 103  
P.O. Box 6000  
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

Dear Dr. Savoie:

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to provide input to the Task Force. As both a private citizen and CEO of Alcool NB Liquor, the question surrounding the use and protection of personal and business information is one that I certainly give careful consideration to.

We have reviewed the contents of your Task Force's discussion paper, and we believe as your paper states that: "Open and transparent government is now regarded as a key component of representative democracy." We do think it is important to recognize that legislation setting the standards for the release of information, be it business or personal, must always carry with it respect for those who manage or own the information. It should never become so intrusive that it creates a sense of paranoia within either government or the private sector. At that point it loses its purpose and can, in fact, be in danger of becoming the opposite of what it was intended to be, a weapon instead of a tool.

The overriding philosophy at our crown corporation has been to consider how we can be as transparent as possible with our operational processes. We have put this into practice for most of our everyday activities, and of course we are required by our own Act to file an Annual Report with the government of the day. This then becomes a public document. We share business information with the beverage alcohol supplier community and with our fellow liquor jurisdictions across the country.

It has been our experience that combining the need to protect confidential personal and business information with the willingness to be open about the management of our company, has afforded us the opportunity to remain in control of our interaction with the general public and the media.

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As much as possible, we use an informal, service-oriented approach to requests for information. We respond promptly to each written inquiry we receive, and we have an online customer contact channel, through our ANBL website, which is used frequently by consumers. At the same time, we are careful to respect our obligations under the Liquor Control Act and our own Corporation Act.

In considering the topics covered by your series of questions, we would like to comment on a couple of these. Question “**5. Administration,**” speaks to the costs associated with the process, and it does seem prudent to create a uniform application system to streamline requests. Having the ability to extend the response deadline would seem to be a necessity, however what monitoring mechanism would be put in place to ensure that this extension process was not used as a stalling tactic?

Question “**10. Purpose of collected information,**” sets out the parameters of tacit consent for Government’s use of personal information. It would seem more appropriate, anytime that the Government asks for information from a citizen, that an opportunity is provided for the citizen to make his/her wishes known. It would only take one line on any form. That would ensure that the sharing of the information is done with true consent and not “implied” consent.

Dana Clendenning

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