



April 13, 2017

BULLETIN: NEW FEDERAL CANNABIS LEGISLATION (BILL C-45, the Cannabis Act, 2017)

Today the federal government tabled a its highly anticipated “Cannabis Act” – a 121 page bill that, if passed, would make the sale and consumption of recreational marijuana legal throughout Canada.

Timelines

The government’s stated aim is to have the legislation pass before July 1st, 2017 (an ambitious deadline), and to have the legalized system in place by the end of June 2018 – incidentally, this is the same time as the Provincial election in Ontario.

Federal Legislation

Bill C-45 proposes some Canada-wide standards for legalization. Some of the notable points include:

- 18 will be the baseline legal age limit (provinces can increase this);
- Importing and exporting cannabis will only be allowed through a new federal permitting system;
- There will be a 30 gram carrying limit per person;
- There is an allowance for up to 4 plants to be grown for personal use per household;
- Dedicated inspectors (likely from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)) will be provided a broad scope of inspection and enforcement powers to ensure safe cultivation and processing of cannabis products;
- Establishment of food and safety standards for cannabis products, as well as the establishment of a tracking system for enforcement purposes;
- There will be strict “zero-tolerance” penalties for selling to minors;

Provincial Role

Bill C-45 leaves a great deal up to provinces to set their own regulations and enforcement mechanisms. Specifically Provinces will have to:

- Set their own legal age for purchase and consumption of cannabis products (the federal default age is 18 per the legislation);
- Regulate how retail and distribution will be regulated; and
- Implement zoning rules for cannabis businesses.

Conclusion

S&A sees a great but fleeting opportunity to affect the new legalized weed climate in Canada and in Ontario through the various legislative, regulatory and policy changes that are coming at each level over the next several months. Interested organizations should contact S&A for further information.

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