

VLT Commissions

In numerous discussions with Minister Jim Reiter, Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Liquor & Gaming, we learned that the VLT commission increase we had received was tied to the COVID-19 Emergency Order. At the end of the order, commissions would automatically revert to 15%. Minister Reiter also indicated that he was extremely interested in meeting again to discuss next steps and to hear from industry.

Subsequently President/CEO Hospitality Saskatchewan Jim Bence, two Hospitality Saskatchewan board members and one local restaurateur were able to meet with the minister and given the opportunity to express our concerns. We highlighted the many challenges we were experiencing and the concerns of how long it was going to take to recover. We reiterated how important the VLT increase was to your survivability and sustainability. We also discussed continued threats to revenues, such as casino reopening's, loss of market share to online gambling and the significant change to consumer habits and spending patterns. The Minister acknowledged that these are all credible and serious concerns for operators who depend on VLT revenues.

Minister Reiter was appreciative of the information and empathized with the position our sector was in, and how difficult the last 16 months had been. He also expressed interest in continuing the dialogue and would include us in an upcoming review of VLT commissions with SLGA.

We were very encouraged by the minister's genuine interest and understanding of the crisis we faced and the fact that there was still a long way to go before we get anywhere close to "normal".

We also took the opportunity to express our great appreciation for the initial increase and the extensions that were granted as, for many, it was the difference between surviving or closing. We were very encouraged by the minister's willingness to meet again, meet often, and listen to our recommendations. Recent correspondence with SLGA President and CEO Susan Ross has reaffirmed the sense of commitment we felt from the minister.

Hospitality Saskatchewan will keep you updated as talks develop.

