



The voice of live
music in Canada
La voix du spectacle
musical au Canada

February 10, 2022

Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer
Office of the Provincial Health Officer
PO Box 9648 STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9P4

Sent via Email

Ref: Phased Reopening of BC's Live Music Venues

Dear Dr. Henry,

Thank you once again from Canada's live music industry, for your continued leadership during this exceedingly difficult time.

Recent announcements regarding the lifting of capacity restrictions nationwide have brought renewed hope for Canada's beleaguered live music industry. Across the country, the loosening of restrictions, thanks to decreasing cases and hospitalizations, is a significant step forward for our industry which has struggled to survive lockdowns and staggering revenue loss.

While this is good news, we are concerned that similar, ongoing restrictions in BC mean live music venues and others will continue to be at severe risk of permanent closure. Further contraction of the live music market will negatively impact a remarkably broad range of other local and related business, as well as the careers of BC artists. The economic, social and cultural impact of concerts go *well beyond* artists, fans and workers – neighboring restaurants, shops, and other retail – this industry touches many sectors (tourism, travel, hospitality, transportation, production, security, catering, printing, etc.) both directly, and indirectly.

Federal financial supports are coming to an end, leaving businesses *once again* in a financially precarious and uncertain position. Recovery from the devastating impacts of COVID-19 has been slow and uneven. If the province continues to delay its full reopening, the consequences for our industry will be dire. On top of cancelled bookings and sunk business costs, it will mean even greater reliance on emergency programs and other urgent supports. This is a business that needs run-way to plan, and with time quickly running out the unthinkable – *a third summer of limited live music activity* – will exacerbate the fragile mental health of an entire industry, which (and this cannot be overstated) is rapidly deteriorating.

Live music businesses have embraced public health regulations, with many leading the way by developing,

sharing, and implementing rigorous safety measures to protect the health and safety of their audiences, employees, artists, and crews. The sector is deeply committed to working with you and remaining vigilant as the pandemic evolves.

But this industry needs to get back to work before there's no local industry to reopen. Homegrown live music and all that it gives us is literally vanishing before our eyes - especially heartrending given BC's incredible artists and their profound and important collective impact on Canadian culture at large.

We are therefore urging you to consider an accelerated **reopening for all live music spaces**.

Formerly contributing upwards of \$3B to GDP and creating 72,000 jobs, we're ready to get back to work and unleash the full spectrum of music and entertainment activity we create. It's time for all British Columbians, in cities and towns right across the province, to once again begin to leverage the incredible economic and social impacts that our beloved industry generates. Please help our artists, our workers and our businesses to do this.

Sincerely,



Erin Benjamin
President & CEO
Canadian Live Music Association
ebenjamin@canadianlivemusic.ca / 613.769.5559