

October 10, 2018

The Honourable Vic Fedeli  
Minister of Finance  
7 Queen's Park Crescent, 7th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Y7

Dear Minister:

It has come to my attention that the Ontario Cannabis Store (OCS) has opened a warehouse to distribute cannabis in preparation for legalization next week. CEO Pat Ford has not disclosed the warehouse's location but confirms it has been contracted out to a third party. This action raises a number of urgent questions and concerns for OPSEU.

First, who is the third-party vendor and upon what criteria were they hired? We are not aware of an RFP being issued. Why is the location being kept secret?

As you know, OPSEU has been in negotiations with OCS on a framework agreement. As part of that agreement, workers would be represented by OPSEU, with wages and benefits similar to those of LCBO workers, including a pension plan with the OPSEU Pension Trust. Do the warehouse workers even know they are OPSEU members?

We are not aware of job postings for these positions. Where were these jobs advertised to the public? How did workers hear about them? What training have they received?

Most importantly, why was there no discussion with OPSEU – these workers' bargaining representative? At the very least, they cannot be protected by a joint health and safety committee, because the union is unable to appoint the worker members.

The OCS has already spent millions of taxpayer dollars – with nothing to show for it. An investigation into OCS is already ongoing, and these latest actions only muddy the waters further. The government could have used, and should use, existing LCBO stores, which can be retrofitted at a very small cost. Customers would be assured the product they buy was properly sourced and tested, and is the same price throughout Ontario. LCBO staff enjoy a well-deserved reputation for social responsibility when it comes to selling controlled products. In short, Ontarians trust the LCBO.

Minister, legalizing the sale of cannabis was meant to bring this business into the light of day. Why is your government working in the shadows? Why the secrecy? It can certainly be interpreted as evidence of further corruption and cronyism. Draw back the curtains. Let the people see who is benefiting from the legal sale of cannabis in this province: taxpayers? Or covert, politically connected private interests?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Warren Thomas".

Warren (Smokey) Thomas  
President, Ontario Public Service Employees Union