

**From:** [webmaster@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:webmaster@assembly.ab.ca)  
**To:** [EconomicFuture Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Input on agri-food and agribusiness in Alberta - RESPONSE January 15, 2017 11:12 PM  
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**PART A: Submitter Contact Information**

First Name: Terry  
 Last Name: Rock  
 Business (if applicable): Alberta Small Brewers Association  
 E-mail: [REDACTED]  
 Phone: [REDACTED]  
 City/Town: Calgary

**PART B:**

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 Feedback  
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The Government of Alberta has taken important strides to support Alberta's burgeoning craft brewing sector. The Alberta Small Brewers Development Grant has played a crucial role in correcting competitive imbalances that resulted due to the fact that Alberta operates the only fully open liquor retailing market in Canada. Alberta was a dumping ground for brewers across North America. Though we still have a very healthy and competitive retail market, out-of-province competitors are more discerning about entering the market, and are no longer dumping product.

With the inter-provincial competitive imbalance has been addressed, we continue to see robust growth in the industry. We are approaching 50 active small breweries in Alberta, with approximately 20 in the planning phase. However, we believe that now is the time to invest in the industry as a whole, as has been done in Ontario since 2004 through the Ontario Microbrewery Strategy.

As the home of some of the best barley in the world and an established tourism infrastructure, Alberta has the opportunity to make craft brewing a signature industry, with vastly higher impact than we have now, from multiple streams. To get there, we should create an Alberta Craft Brewing Industry Strategy with the following elements:

- 1) Fund the creation of the strategy itself, including an economic impact profile (complete in 2017)
- 2) Investment in the following key areas:
  - promoting the advantages of locally-produced product to Albertans
  - promoting Alberta-made beer to tourists at major/international events that draw travellers to Alberta (such as touring sporting or cultural events, major exhibitions, etc.)
  - developing new markets outside Alberta
  - developing brewing industry specific training and product quality initiatives
  - building stronger linkages into the value chain: from barley and hops cultivation to malting and equipment manufacturing
  - facilitating collaboration with other craft beverage manufacturers (distilleries, meaderies, estate wineries) in the creation of a robust tourism offering taking advantage of our world class products
- 3) Streamlining and modernizing regulations
  - Significant progress has been made by the regulator (AGLC) to support growth in the industry, but we believe more could be done to make it easier for breweries to become community hubs and event spaces that are attractive to locals and tourist.
  - Allowing breweries to diversify the amount of on site activity they are allowed to offer customers will create stronger revenue streams and a more robust industry. This can be accomplished while still protecting the public

through clear and appropriate regulation.

4) Establishing an integrated research & development agenda for brewing

- Alberta should aspire to be a destination for the global brewing industry. By linking industry and agriculture with our post-secondary and government innovation research facilities, Alberta could become a go-to location for advancements in areas such as malt barley and wheat, fermentation, hops growing, etc. Olds College is already making strides in key areas, but we would like to encourage a province-wide commitment to make Alberta an brewing innovation leader.

NOTE: Alberta Small Brewers Association would be happy to collaborate in any of the above with adjacent industries such as distilling and estate wine and mead manufacturing.

PART C: HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS STUDY?

- Radio
- Western Producer Online
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Newspaper
- Other