



# **What We Heard:** Early Hours of Liquor Service

**October 2020**

## Introduction

Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) is responsible for licensing, regulating, and monitoring liquor activities in Alberta. AGLC administers the *Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Act (GLCA)*, *Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Regulation (GLCR)*, and related policies.

AGLC is focused on reviewing its policies to ensure they support economic development and industry growth while reflecting a commitment to public health and social responsibility. This document summarizes the results of a survey conducted with stakeholders regarding policies related to early hours of liquor service.

Specifically, the objectives of the consultation were to:

- gauge the level of support for policy changes that would allow for earlier hours of on-premises liquor service,
- gauge the level of support for policy changes that would allow for earlier hours of liquor sales in retail liquor stores.

## Background

AGLC has received requests in the past for early hours of service related to major sports events (i.e. Olympics, World Cup) and festivals (i.e. Calgary Stampede). AGLC has granted these requests on a temporary basis. However, some liquor licensees have inquired about adjusting hours of liquor service on a permanent basis.

This review aligns with the government's commitment to effective regulation and increasing opportunities for businesses.

## Methodology

AGLC consulted with stakeholders from October 13 to October 30, 2020. The consultation invited feedback from stakeholders representing the following sectors: Municipalities and Municipal Associations; Law Enforcement; Health; Liquor Industry; Class A, B, C, or F Licenced Premises; and Class D Licensed Premises. Participants received an email invitation or letter with a link to the online survey. Some survey respondents forwarded their email invitation to others within their organization, which led to overrepresentation in some categories. Participants were asked a series of questions to gather their feedback regarding early hours of liquor service and potential opportunities and risks.

## Response Rates

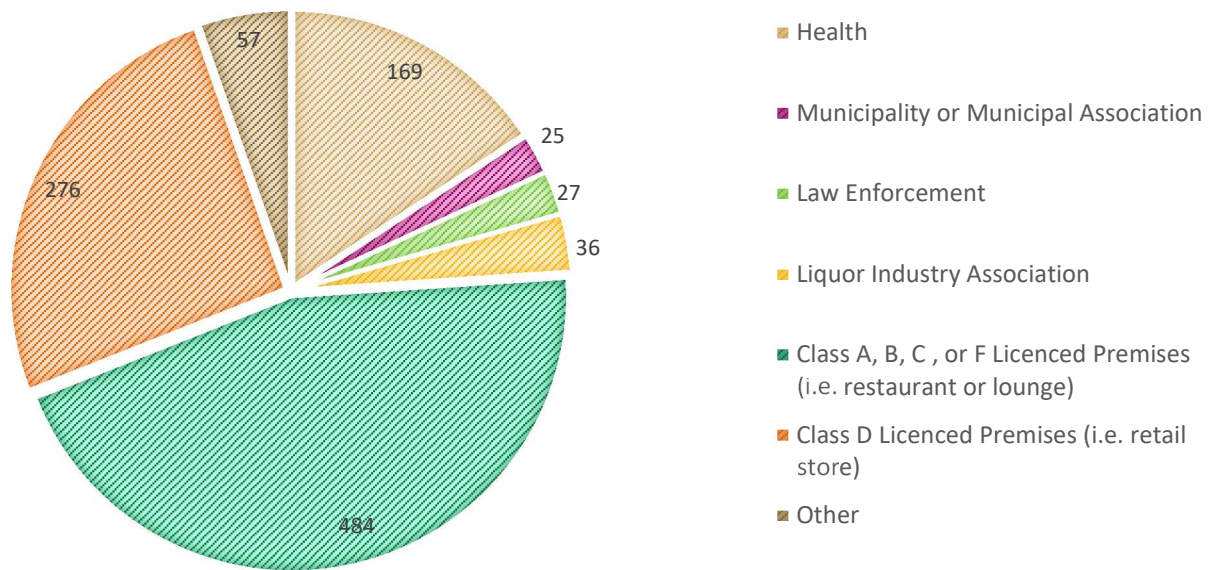
The following table shows the participation rates obtained for this consultation:

Stakeholder Group	Number of respondents	Percentage of responses
Health*	169	15.75
Municipality or Municipal Association	25	2.33
Law Enforcement	27	2.52
Liquor Industry Association	36	3.36
Class A, B, C, or F Licenced Premises (i.e. restaurant or lounge)**	484	45.07
Class D Licenced Premises (i.e. retail liquor store)**	276	25.72
Other	57	5.31
Totals	1,074	100%

\* Health sector stakeholders were significantly represented, demonstrating the interest this topic garnered; 169 responses were received from three initial invitations.

\*\* Class A, B, C, D, and F total 71% of total responses

## BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDENTS BY CATEGORY



## Consultation Findings

The survey opened with questions to categorize respondents. The remainder of the survey focused on the following topics:

1. Support for extending early hours of on-premises liquor service;
2. Support for extending early hours of liquor sales in retail liquor stores;
3. Benefits/risks of extending hours of on-premises liquor service;
4. Statement of alignment including a risk statement, benefit statement, and no opinion statement.

One-thousand seventy-four respondents replied. Responses to the topics are summarized below.

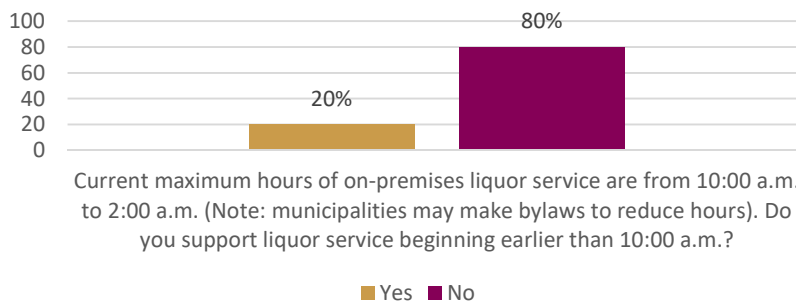
### Support for earlier hours of on-premises liquor service

Respondents were asked to choose between yes or no if they support on-premises liquor service starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.:

Nine-hundred-thirteen responses were received while 161 respondents chose not to answer the question. Respondents who answered yes were also asked to specify what time liquor service should begin. The majority of suggested times ranged from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. with a few recommendations that service should be 24 hours.

The following tables show the results in more detail:

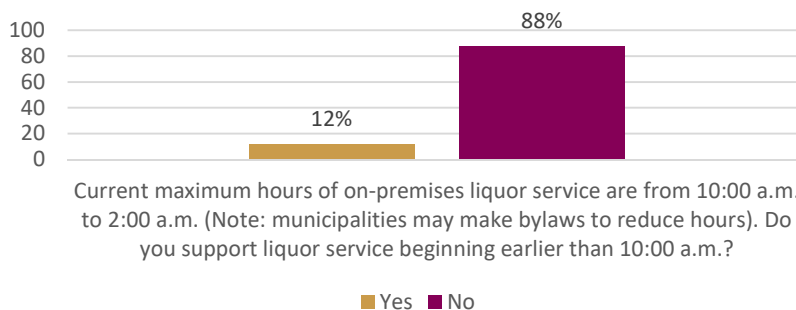
#### Municipality or Municipal Association



Current maximum hours of on-premises liquor service are from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. (Note: municipalities may make bylaws to reduce hours). Do you support liquor service beginning earlier than 10:00 a.m.?

Of those who responded, 20 per cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of on-premises liquor service starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.

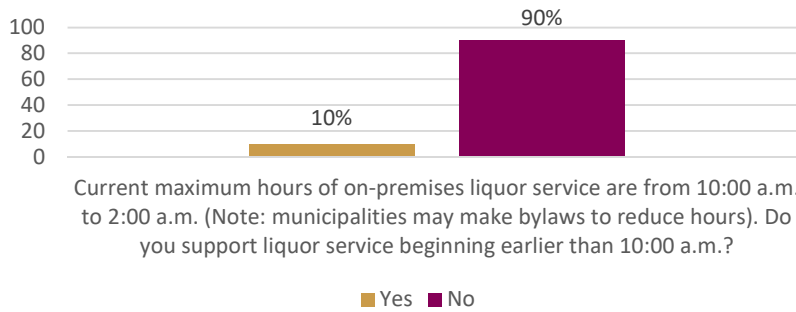
#### Law Enforcement



Current maximum hours of on-premises liquor service are from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. (Note: municipalities may make bylaws to reduce hours). Do you support liquor service beginning earlier than 10:00 a.m.?

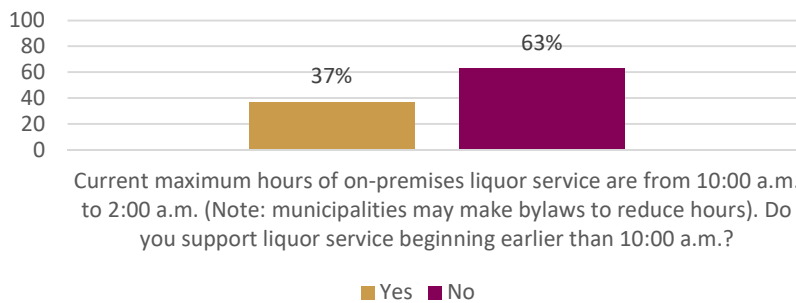
Of those who responded, 12 percent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of on-premises liquor service starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.

## Health



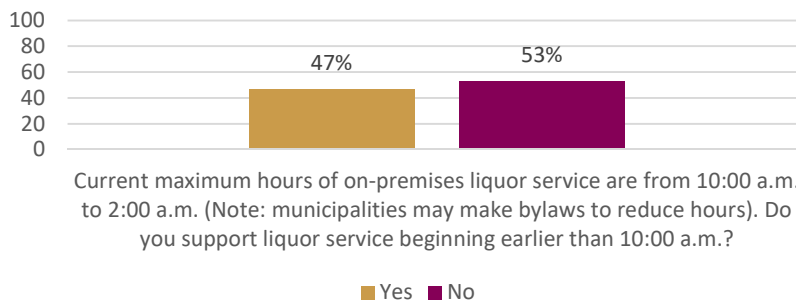
Of those who responded, ten per-cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of on-premises liquor service starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.

## Liquor Industry Association



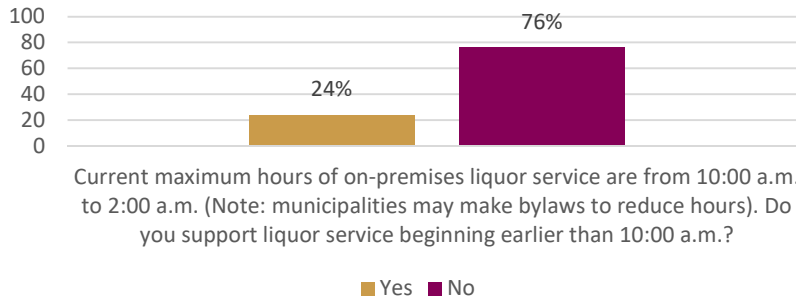
Of those who responded, 37 per-cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of on-premises liquor service starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.

## Class A, B, C, or F Licenced Premises (i.e. restaurant or lounge)



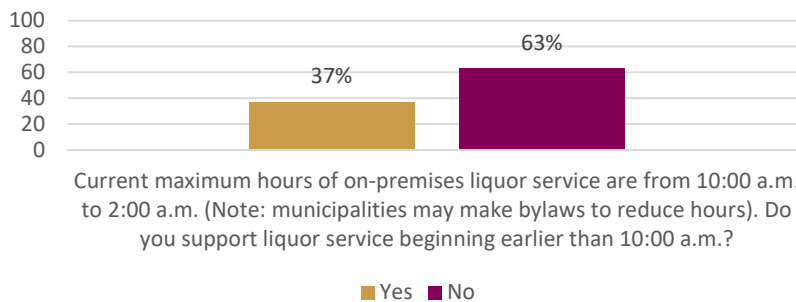
Of those who responded, 47 per-cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of on-premises liquor service starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.

### Class D Licenced Premises (i.e. retail liquor store)



Of those who responded, 24 per-cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of on-premises liquor service starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.

### Other



Of those who responded, 37 per-cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of on-premises liquor service starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.

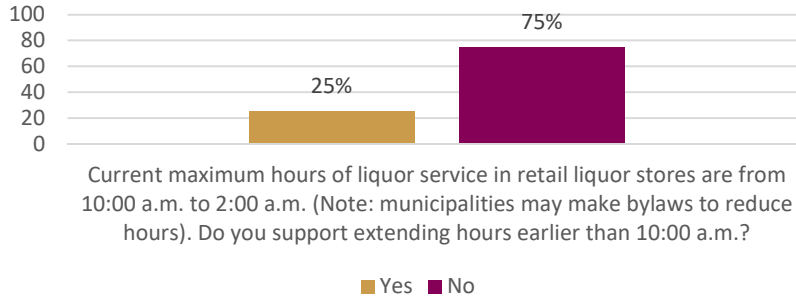
### Support for earlier hours of liquor sales in retail liquor stores

Respondents were asked to choose between yes or no if they support extending hours of liquor service for retail liquor stores earlier than 10:00 a.m.:

Nine-hundred-thirteen responses were received while 161 respondents chose not to answer the question. Respondents who answered yes were also asked to specify what time liquor service could begin. Most respondents suggested times between 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. with a few recommendations that service should be 24 hours.

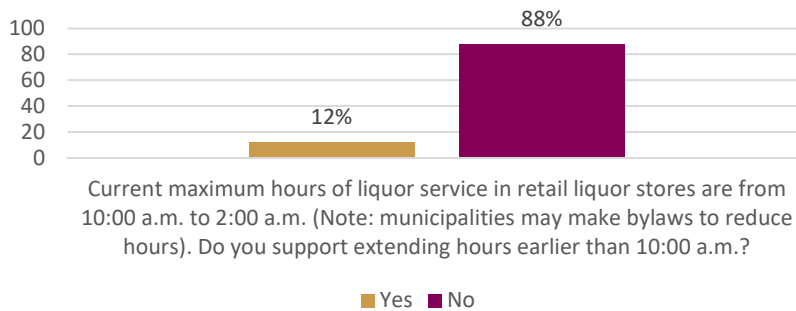
The graphs below show responses by sector:

## Municipality or Municipal Association



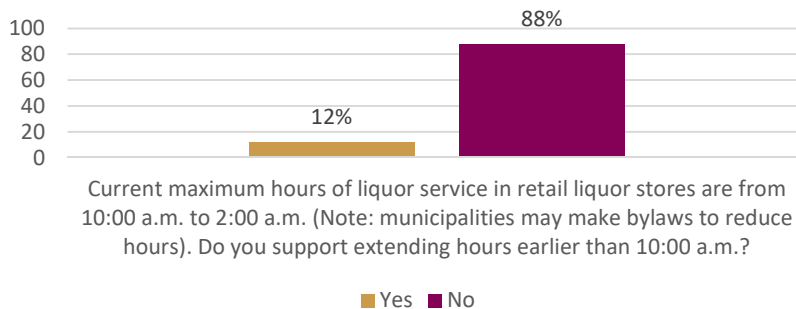
Of those who responded, 25 per-cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of retail liquor sales starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.

## Law Enforcement



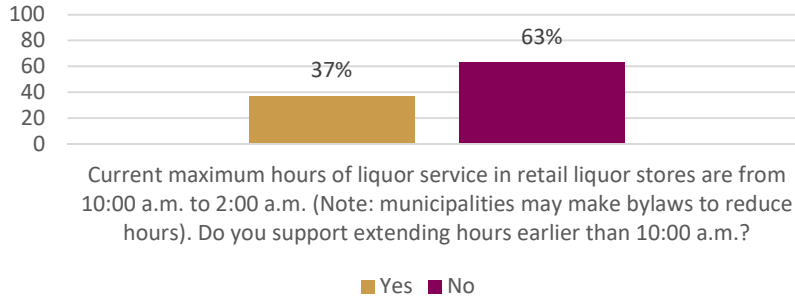
Of those who responded, 12 per-cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of retail liquor sales starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.

## Health



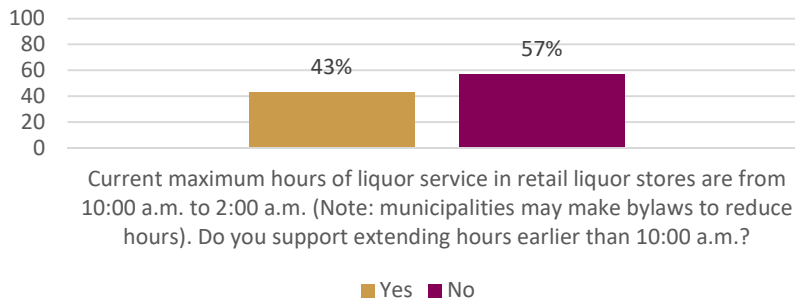
Of those who responded, 12 per-cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of retail liquor sales starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.

## Liquor Industry Association



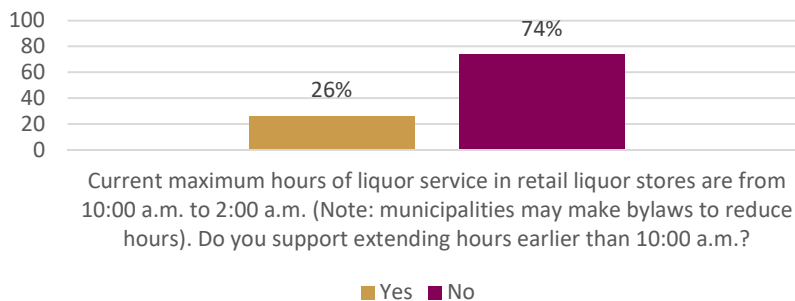
Of those who responded, 37 per-cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of retail liquor sales starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.

## Class A, B, C, or F Licenced Premises (i.e. restaurant or lounge)



Of those who responded, 43 per-cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of retail liquor sales starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.

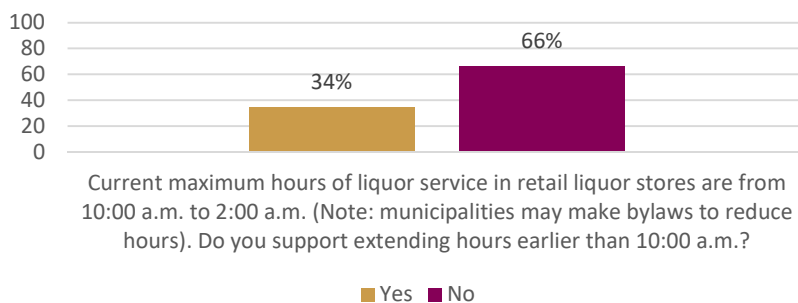
## Class D Licenced Premises (i.e. retail store)



Of those who responded, 26 per-cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of retail liquor sales starting earlier than 10:00 a.m.



## Other



Of those who responded, 34 per-cent support policy changes to accommodate the allowance of retail liquor sales starting earlier than 10:00 a.m..

## Benefits of extending liquor hours of service for a licenced premises

Respondents were asked, “What do you see as the potential benefits of extending liquor service hours so that a licenced premises can sell or serve liquor earlier than they do now?”

Eight-hundred twenty-nine responses were received; 245 respondents chose not to answer the question.

Respondents provided further comments and respondents’ answers generally fell within two main themes when mentioning benefits. A few responses regarding benefits are listed below to provide additional context:

Theme 1 Economic	Theme 2 Convenience
<p><i>“Increased sales and access.”</i></p> <p><i>“Increased profit from sales.”</i></p> <p><i>“Increased early sale of alcohol, increased tourism for casino and resorts for vacation destination partiers, increased utilization of ski hill lounges in the morning for a “coffee and baileys”</i></p> <p><i>“Allowing licensed establishments to do breakfast cocktails/increase revenue.”</i></p> <p><i>“More options for guests - increased liquor sales”</i></p>	<p><i>“A small percentage of the population does not work 8-5 daily. More of a convenience than anything else.”</i></p> <p><i>“24 hr service. Any time restriction is just based on a cultural norm, but people should be able to access services whenever they would like to/need to. Purchasing liquor should have the same rules as purchasing food.”</i></p> <p><i>“People would have greater access to services. It would also limit the number of people shopping at the same time.”</i></p> <p><i>“Good for holidays and special occasions”</i></p> <p><i>“It allows those who work shift work to enjoy the same freedoms as others.”</i></p>

## Risks of extending liquor hours of service for a licenced premises

Respondents were asked, “What do you see as the potential risks of extending liquor service hours so that a licenced premises can sell or serve liquor earlier than they do now?”

Eight-hundred eighteen responses were received; 256 respondents chose not to answer the question.

Respondents’ comments generally fell within two main themes. A few responses regarding risks are listed below to provide additional context:

Theme 1 Health	Theme 2 Safety
<i>“Only people drinking early will be people with alcohol addiction.”</i>	<i>“Risks include increase in impaired driving, increase in retail theft/shoplifting, robberies, social disorder (ie. disturbances, assaults)”</i>
<i>“More exposure to the issues that go along with liquor service, addiction, violence, &amp; disorder”</i>	<i>“Security risk.”</i>
<i>“Some people may start to drink earlier, but those people probably already have what they want on them. Opening early gives more control to the licensee”</i>	<i>“More theft and robberies”</i>

## Alignment with Organizational Perspective

Respondents were asked to choose a statement that best aligned with their organization/business. The question had three potential responses:

1. The benefits of earlier liquor hours of service outweigh the risks;
2. The risks from earlier liquor hours of service outweigh the benefits;
3. I have a neutral opinion regarding the benefits and risks from earlier hours of liquor services.

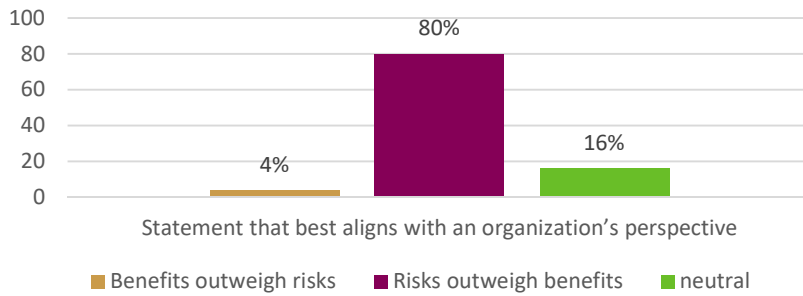
Nine-hundred thirteen responses were received while 160 respondents chose not to answer the question.

### Municipality or Municipal Association



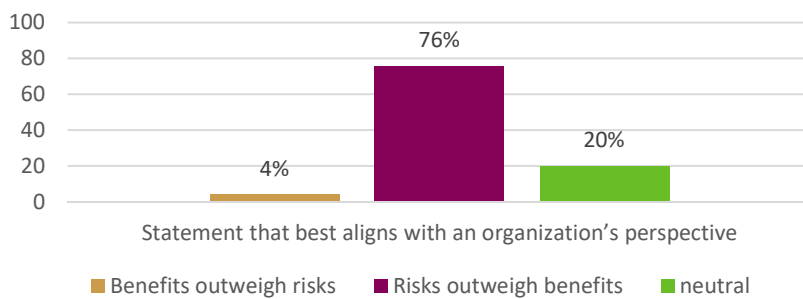
Of those who responded, 10 per-cent felt their organization’s perspective felt the benefits of earlier service outweighed the risks.

## Law Enforcement



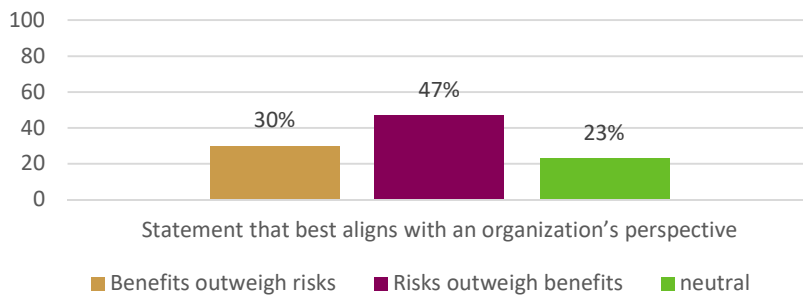
Of those who responded, four per-cent felt their organization's perspective felt the benefits of earlier service outweighed the risks.

## Health



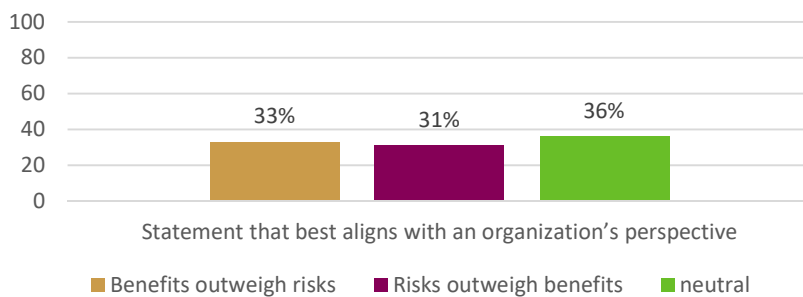
Of those who responded, four per-cent felt their organization's perspective felt the benefits of earlier service outweighed the risks.

## Liquor Industry Association



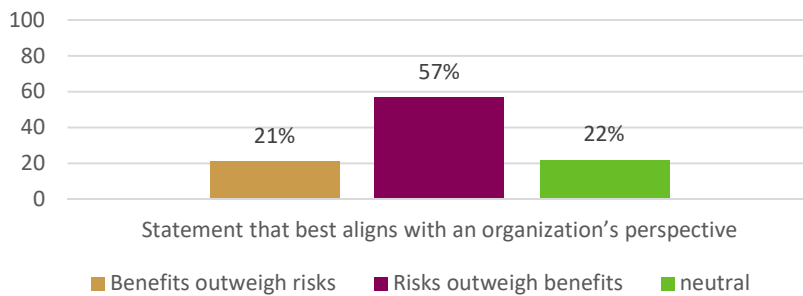
Of those who responded, 30 per-cent felt their organization's perspective felt the benefits of earlier service outweighed the risks.

## Class A, B, C, or F Licenced Premises (i.e. restaurant or lounge)



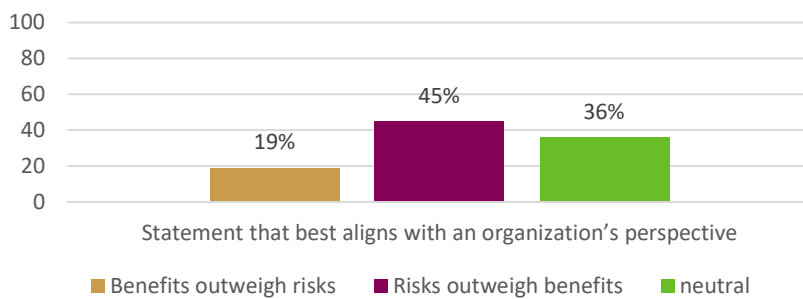
Of those who responded, 33 per-cent felt their organization's perspective felt the benefits of earlier service outweighed the risks.

### Class D Licenced Premises (i.e. retail store)



Of those who responded, 21 per-cent felt their organization's perspective felt the benefits of earlier service outweighed the risks.

### Other



Of those who responded, 19 per-cent felt their organization's perspective felt the benefits of earlier service outweighed the risks.

### Additional Comments

The final question provided respondents with the opportunity to add any additional comments. The main themes that emerged were concerns about public health and how the proposed policy would support individual choice. The comments below were representative of the responses received:

Theme 1 Concerns about public health	Theme 2 Business Flexibility
<p><i>"I see no reason for extended hours of operation. If this is an evidence-informed decision that considers health and social harms to communities, economic costs to health care system and long-term impacts on quality of life for Albertans--the decision should be to not extend hours. Profits for a select number of businesses and larger companies should not be at the expense of safety and public health"</i></p>	<p><i>"I believe that the hours set by the AGLC are one guideline however, each location has to decide where their risk may lie and decide what is best. For example, even if alcohol service is listed as 10-2, that does not mean that the decision to serve at 10 would be the final decision."</i></p> <p><i>"Extending to early hours will be situational not regular day in day out use. So risks are also mitigated due to low frequency. It would mostly be for specific sporting events."</i></p>

## Further Analysis – Health Sector Response

The consultation response from the health sector was high in relation to invites – 15.74 per cent of the total respondents identified themselves as a health-related stakeholder while 0.07 per cent of persons invited to participate in the survey are in the health industry.

Among those who identified as Health sector stakeholders, 90 per cent were not in support of policy changes to allow for earlier hours of on-premises liquor service. Of these stakeholders, 88 per cent did not support earlier hours of sales in retail liquor stores.

Seventy-six per cent of Health sector stakeholders felt that the following statement aligns best with their organization’s perspective – *the risks from earlier liquor hours of service outweigh the benefits*. This is a contrast to four per cent who felt the following statement aligns best with their organization’s perspective – *the benefits of earlier liquor hours of service outweigh the risks*. Twenty per cent of Health sector stakeholders had a neutral opinion regarding benefits and risks from earlier hours for liquor service.

## Further Analysis – Alberta Health Services

According to a written submission from Alberta Health Services (AHS), allowing earlier liquor service would increase the availability of liquor and result in increased per capita consumption and harms. AHS cited research from the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) that alcohol is one of the leading causes of disease, disability and death in Alberta. AHS acknowledged the place alcohol has in the social landscape but expressed that policies aimed at expanding the use and availability of alcohol would be problematic and not aligned with its efforts to address harms associated with alcohol use.

In its submission, AHS advised the following:

“To reduce alcohol-related harms in Alberta, adoption of the *Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation Gold Standard Best Practice Alcohol Policy Framework* for hours of service is advised:

- Set hours of liquor service by regulation, without exception, that limit and standardize access to alcohol for the province as a whole.
- Hours of service for off-premise outlets between 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. only, and
- Hours of service for on-premise outlets (regardless of license class) between 11 a.m. and 1 a.m. the following day.
- No exceptions that increase hours of service for any license class for an event or brief timeframe (e.g. major events or sporting tournaments).”

## Conclusion

This consultation captured a variety of comments from stakeholders both in support of and in opposition to earlier hours of liquor service. The primary reason given for supporting earlier hours of liquor service was economic and/or convenience for those who shop early in the day or those who work outside of a regular workweek schedule (Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.).

As noted above, significant concerns were brought forward from health sector stakeholders. Notably AHS took a firm position opposing changes to permit earlier hours of liquor service, citing evidence that doing so would lead to increased alcohol-related harms.

The majority of law enforcement and municipal stakeholders were opposed with making changes to accommodate earlier hours of liquor service. The most common reasons cited for their opposition were potential negative effects that earlier alcohol consumption would have on Albertans struggling with

addictions and negative impacts from alcohol consumption that contribute to increased violence and disorder.

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AGLC wishes to thank all stakeholders for their participation in the Early Hours of Liquor Service survey.