

SUBJECT: Grow-Ops Registry

SUBMITTED BY: Association of Saskatchewan REALTORS®

BACKGROUND/ISSUE

Marijuana production sites and sites used to produce hard drugs such as crystal methamphetamines are commonly called “grow-ops.” The RCMP indicates there are approximately 200 grow-ops in its jurisdiction, which does not include the major cities.

Grow-op sites pose risks to owners, buyers and occupants. Their value is diminished, with no clear path to recovering the lost value, despite the fact that an innocent third party may be the owner. Saskatchewan does not have a systematic approach to dealing with grow-ops. The province is not able to:

- identify properties that have been production sites;
- measure their contamination;
- provide reliable information to buyers or potential occupants; or
- certify that contamination or other hazard has been remedied and the property is safe for use.

Police who have entered a property, and in some cases, federal health authorities who have licensed it for medical marijuana production, have the records needed to create a comprehensive provincial registry. No one assembles this information, and no one provides it to the public.

Property owners are not required to disclose illicit use unless asked directly. Owners may in fact not be aware of illicit use by a tenant, or by a preceding owner. Serious long term problems can be treated cosmetically and take months or years to become apparent.

Individuals and families who purchase these properties may find themselves liable for significant costs to restore property bought in good faith. Further, there are no commonly accepted routes for a known grow-op site to come back to the market as fit for occupancy.

A legitimate government service is assembling and verifying standardized, reliable information that enables people to make informed choices. Governments do this for securities being sold to the public, for food production, for restaurants, automobiles and many other areas. Government action in these areas can be modest yet valuable and highly effective, creating a level of confidence that enables the market.

Saskatchewan REALTORS® have asked the provincial government to take two steps:

1. **Registry:** Create a single central registry where RCMP and municipal police and public health authorities would register grow-op sites as they become known, with ready public access available online.

2. Entry and exit standards: Establish a threshold level of drug production that requires the property to be registered, and, a remediation standard that enables a property to be de-listed.

RECOMMENDED

1) That the Government of Saskatchewan require all police and health authorities in the province to report grow-ops to a central registry where the information can be made available upon request to the general public, and establish standards for listing and delisting grow-op properties.