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UNLEASHING THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF ONTARIO'S BEVERAGE ALCOHOL SECTOR

Ontario Chamber Network Recommends a Comprehensive Approach to Alcohol Reform in Ontario



On July 22, the Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce (TDCC) and Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) released a new report, *Refreshing the Sale of Beverage Alcohol in Ontario*. This report outlines how the Province could modernize the sale and distribution of beverage alcohol and responsibly promote growth across all four categories – wine, beer, spirits, and cider.

“Ontarians want to see a more modern, convenient beverage alcohol retail system and we are closer than ever to substantive reforms to how alcohol is distributed, bought, and sold in Ontario,” says Rocco Rossi, President and CEO of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

The report finds that, despite public support for modernization, reform is a more complex undertaking than it appears at first glance, due to the complexity of legislation and regulation involved. As the government proceeds with reforms to beverage alcohol sales, the TDCC and OCC underscore the need for a comprehensive approach to avoid perpetuating inequities in the taxation and regulation of wine, beer, cider, and spirits that limit growth.

“By removing barriers and levelling the playing field,” Rossi added, “The Province can unleash the potential of the beverage alcohol sector, support regional economic development, meet the needs of today’s consumer, and generate greater tax revenue to fund the public services on which Ontarians rely.”

Refreshing the Sale of Beverage Alcohol in Ontario provides the Government of Ontario with a number of timely recommendations including:

- Modernizing the sale of beverage alcohol by allowing beverage alcohol producers to sell their products on e-commerce marketplaces and platforms using third parties to process payments.
- Alleviating tax burdens by reducing taxes on Ontario wines, aligning taxation levels for craft cider with those of craft beer, and applying a graduated tax to the current spirits basic tax.
- Cutting red tape by reducing the reporting Ontario wineries and cideries have to complete from a monthly to quarterly basis, allowing Ontario spirits and craft beer producers with a retail store to sell their products at farmers' markets, and providing airports with an exemption to allow for the sale of alcohol 24-hours-a-day.
- Removing antiquated inter-provincial trade barriers by allowing consumers to purchase alcohol online from other provinces/territories and producers to deliver these products to the consumer's home.

“The power of the beverage alcohol sector to be a force for economic growth extends beyond just the expected industries. The production, distribution, and sale of alcohol has a ripple effect that benefits agriculture, tourism and hospitality, and retail in all corners of the province,” stated Matt Esseltine, President, Tillsonburg District Chamber of Commerce.

Read the OCC's report, Refreshing the Sale of Beverage Alcohol in Ontario [here](#).