

It's time to support local beer, wine and spirits producers by letting Canadians shop online

TORONTO, ON, December 5, 2018—Canada is home to a burgeoning wine, beer and spirits industry, but Canadians can't take full advantage of these products because obsolete trade barriers prevent the free-flow of beverage alcohol across the country and that should change according to the Canadian Global Cities Council (CGCC).

Two weeks ago, Toronto Region Board of Trade raised the idea that federal and provincial First Ministers should sign an *icebreaker* deal on alcohol sales, allowing for e-commerce of any locally produced alcoholic beverage across any interprovincial border. This holiday season, the CGCC and its partners in the beverage alcohol sector are calling on the First Ministers to give Canadians the gift of more robust internal trade at their meeting this Friday.

“With the holiday season upon us, Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast are on the hunt for the perfect gift for their loved ones, but instead of a happy holiday memory, they could be in for a hefty fine or possible jail time if they order their favourite beer, wine or spirits directly from an out of province producer,” said Jan De Silva, Chair, Canadian Global Cities Council and President & CEO, Toronto Region Board of Trade. “In Ontario an individual who violates the *Liquor License Act* could be liable to a fine of up to \$100,000 or imprisonment for up to one year, or both. British Columbia and Ontario are part of the same country, we should not be fining or imprisoning Canadians simply because they want to try another province's product.”

In May, a Statistics Canada report revealed Canadians spent \$22.5-billion on alcohol in 2017. Soberingly, while domestic beer comprises the majority of the Canadian beer sales, imports are growing almost three times faster than domestic beer and imported spirits grew nearly four times faster than domestic. There's room for growth for Canadian wines as well. Domestic wine makes up just over one-third of the Canadian market while American wine comprises nearly three-quarters of the U.S. market.

“We have world class producers right across the country and we should be supporting their ability to grow and succeed by enabling all legal-aged Canadians to order these fantastic products,” said Patrick Sullivan, Vice Chair, Canadian Global Cities Council and President & CEO, Halifax Chamber of Commerce. “Our experience renegotiating NAFTA proves Canadians are free-traders. If we can get a deal with the U.S., surely we can find a way to sell Canadian products to Canadians.”

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About the Canadian Global Cities Council (CGCC)

Founded in 2015, the Canadian Global Cities Council (CGCC) is a coalition of presidents and CEOs of the eight largest urban regional chambers of commerce and boards of trade in Canada: Brampton, Calgary, Edmonton, Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver and Winnipeg. Representing 52 per cent of Canada's GDP and more than half of the country's population, CGCC collaborates on international and domestic issues impacting our regions' competitiveness. Infrastructure, the economic environment, trade and talent are its priority concerns.

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