

Nova Scotians support more beer and wine availability through convenience stores

Support strong among both beverage alcohol consumers and non-consumers

HALIFAX, April 14th, 2021 Results of a public opinion poll among adult Nova Scotians show strong support for expanding the sale of beverage alcohol through the province's network of convenience stores. Among both "drinkers" and "non-drinkers," 73 percent of survey participants expressed some level of support for expanded retailing of beer and wine in convenience stores.

MQO Research was commissioned to conduct the research by the Convenience Industry Council of Canada with the surveying taking place in February. MQO says that the results are accurate within plus or minus 4.88 percentage points.

Anne Kothawala, president and CEO of the Council says that the results are stronger than the same research conducted in 2017: "Back in 2017, 62 percent of adult survey participants supported expanded retailing of wine and beer through convenience stores and now we're up to 73 percent support. We see this as continued growth in consumer expectations for more shopping flexibility and convenience."

Kothawala says that support was measured on a scale of strongly support, support, or somewhat support while opposition was scaled as somewhat oppose, oppose, and strongly oppose.

"When over 40% of survey participants who are drinkers strongly support beverage alcohol expansion, it sends a very clear signal that Nova Scotians feel strongly about choice."

According to Mike Hammoud, president of the Atlantic Convenience Stores Association, Nova Scotia has one of the lowest per capita number of beverage alcohol retail outlets in Canada: "Based on Statistics Canada data, Nova Scotia ranks eighth among the ten provinces in terms of having the lowest per capita number of beverage alcohol retail outlets. In Nova Scotia we're down around 3 while someone like Québec is up around 12 and Newfoundland and Labrador is even higher at 21."

Hammoud said that all of the Maritime provinces have low per capita numbers of beverage alcohol retail outlets.

Tony Diab, who operates Expressway in Dartmouth sees having a selection of beer and wine in his store as a matter of customer service, choice and convenience: "It would be a better and more convenient shopping experience for my customers, and it would help with our financial viability and our ability to serve the communities we are in. There's really no reason that more private sector retailers can't be part of the retail distribution chain for beverage alcohol in Nova Scotia."

"Circle K is a retailer of beverage alcohol in many Canadian and Atlantic Canadian provinces. In those stores where beverage alcohol is available, consumers appreciate it. We'd like to see a

level shopping experience in every Province and provide the majority of consumers the products they want to buy,” said Keith King of Couche-Tard/Circle K.

Both Kothawala and Hammoud stressed that the responsible sale of beverage alcohol must be a priority and pointed out that convenience retailers and staff have training and experience in the sale of age-restricted retail products.

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The MQO CICC research report can be accessed via the link below:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fdTMOewqrUlt5r8lZIJdZ6FAQyAiZRvG/view?usp=sharing>

NOVA SCOTIA

	2017				2021			
	Drinker		Non-Drinker		Drinker		Non-Drinker	
Strongly Support	44%		9%		43%		17%	
Support	17%	75%	19%	47%	27%	87%	18%	61%
Somewhat Support	14%		18%		17%		26%	
Somewhat Oppose	9%		9%		8%		13%	
Oppose	6%	24%	15%	39%	2%	11%	11%	37%
Strongly Oppose	9%		16%		1%		13%	

Support for expanded beer and wine retailing through convenience stores among adult Nova Scotians: 2017 and 2021