

March 23, 2023

## Convenience Industry Council of Canada (CICC)'s Statement on Ontario's 2023 Budget

**Toronto, Ontario** – The following is a statement from Anne Kothawala, President and CEO of the Convenience Industry Council of Canada, on the release of the 2023 Ontario Budget:

“The Convenience Industry Council of Canada (CICC) welcomes the Ontario government’s recognition of the critical role convenience stores play in fuelling the provincial economy as well as ensuring strong, vibrant communities across Ontario. That’s why its commitment to tackle the growing problem of contraband tobacco in Budget 2023 is extremely important.

Contraband costs us all. This is why we have been calling on governments to address contraband tobacco, which accounts for upwards of 30 per cent of the total market. This illegal, multi-billion-dollar industry is costing the government millions in lost tax revenues and jeopardizing the safety of communities. Organized crime and criminal gangs are using proceeds from contraband tobacco as an avenue to further the sale of illicit drugs – that means more guns and gangs in Ontario communities.

Ontario’s 8,000 convenience retailers are committed to working with the Ontario government, Indigenous partners, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders to implement urgent solutions.”

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