

May 15, 2025 – Toronto, Ontario – The following is a statement from the Convenience Industry Council of Canada, on the release of the 2025 Ontario Budget:

“The Convenience Industry Council of Canada (CICC) commends the Government of Ontario for delivering on our recommendations to crack down on the growing contraband tobacco market and modernize Ontario’s beverage alcohol marketplace.

The inclusion of greater fines and enforcement measures in Budget 2025 is another essential step in the province’s fight against the contraband tobacco market. Due to the size and scale of the problem, much more needs to be done to cut off this major source of funding that fuels organized crime and their smuggling networks. Contraband tobacco is eight times more lucrative than selling illicit drugs like cocaine, which demonstrates why organized crime is so invested. Until the risk outweighs the reward, organized crime will continue to exploit this illegal market.

The efforts by Premier Ford and Minister Bethlenfalvy to modernize the beverage alcohol framework have been a game changer for convenience stores across the province. To date, convenience retailers have seen average sales increases of more than 15%, with many of our members, particularly in smaller and rural communities, crediting these reforms for helping them stay competitive and keep their doors open. When the government delivers for convenience stores, it delivers for the local communities they serve, both large and small, urban and rural.

We are proud of the progress made so far and look forward to working closely with the government to refine the framework further and ensure that the unique realities of our sector, especially the smaller store formats, are fully recognized and supported.”

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