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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bid process for wine licenses now open to Ontario grocers

TORONTO – Today the Ontario government announced that the bid process for wine licenses is now open to grocery retailers.

Drinks Ontario is pleased that this process is moving forward as planned and has been part of fruitful discussions with The Premier’s Advisory Council on Government Assets since the panel began, and appreciate that having imported wines on grocery shelves is a completely new initiative for Ontario. However, we have concerns about some restrictions of shelf space for imported products.

“The government’s move toward making wine and beer available through Ontario grocery stores is a good one that will benefit both consumers and the Treasury,” said Heather MacGregor, Drinks Ontario Executive Director. “However, with the release of the Request for Bids, we’re starting to see just how complicated it will be for grocers to offer imported products to their customers should they successfully bid on an unrestricted license.”

“We think that grocers themselves are in a better position to decide which products they should offer their customers, particularly when they are bidding for an unrestricted license.”

“We will be taking some time to review the documents and regulations released today, and listening to our membership, with a view to working out some of these concerns. Our discussions with The Council continue, and we are hopeful that grocers will be able to offer broader selection as the roll-out progresses.”

Drinks Ontario is the provincial trade association representing agents, suppliers, manufacturers, and distributors of beverage alcohol products. Established in 1958, the association seeks to foster positive business relations with trade, government, social responsibility and public interest groups and aims to enhance general education around the responsible use of beverage alcohol products.

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