

Enhancing Competitiveness for Alberta-Made Alcohol

Sponsor: Leduc-Nisku-Wetaskiwin Regional Chamber of Commerce

Co-Sponsor(s): St. Albert & District Chamber of Commerce, Red Deer & District Chamber of Commerce

Issue:

Alberta's small and medium-sized alcohol producers continue to face considerable interprovincial trade barriers due to divergent provincial regulatory requirements and the voluntary nature of harmonization efforts.

Background:

Alberta's alcoholic beverage producers contribute an estimated \$280–\$320 million to Alberta's GDP each year, supporting nearly \$1 billion in total economic impact across the province.⁶⁷ Alberta has over 250 registered craft breweries, wineries, and distilleries and Canada has over 1,500 producers that are blocked from interprovincial expansion.⁶⁸

Despite Alberta's national leadership in maintaining one of the most open and competitive alcohol markets in Canada, significant interprovincial barriers continue to limit the growth potential of our provincial producers. Other provinces maintain restrictive import limits, inconsistent labelling and quality regulations, burdensome product listing requirements, and constraints on direct-to-consumer shipping. These differences force small and medium-sized producers to choose between limiting market scope or investing heavily in compliance infrastructure, ultimately, reducing their ability to compete nationally and lost market opportunities despite producing high-quality products competitive with international offerings.

These interprovincial alcohol trade barriers persist due to divergent provincial regulatory frameworks and the voluntary nature of coordination mechanisms that limit what governments can compel in practice.

Canadians increasingly expect the ability to purchase products online, order Direct to Consumer (DTC), and access craft and specialty items from across the country. Though there has been a formal DTC MOU signed by 9 provinces to acknowledge the patchwork regulations, and inconsistent standards across provinces, key implementation mechanisms are not included. Consequently, market opportunities for innovative small producers are still reduced and consumer access to diverse Canadian products is still limited.

By leading regulatory harmonization, DTC and modernized import rules and procedures, the Government of Alberta can help strengthen supply chains, reinforce Alberta's reputation for competitiveness and innovation, unlock new economic opportunities, and support Canada's domestic economic integration strategy.

The Alberta Chambers of Commerce recommends that the Government of Alberta:

1. Advance regulatory harmonization through the development of draft national

⁶⁷ Beer Canada; AGLC economic overview

⁶⁸ AGLC; Small Alcohol Producers Trapped by Trade Barriers (Dec 18, 2025)

guidelines.

2. Mitigate market-access barriers resulting from regulatory divergence by continuing to implement Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) Sales practices that reflect consumer behaviour and e-commerce trends.
3. Conduct a comparative analysis of provincial markup and regulatory frameworks and make findings available to support voluntary information-sharing and dialogue with other provinces.

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