



For Immediate Release

Ontario wine industry disappointed with Supreme Court ruling

Niagara, ON - April 19, 2018 – The Winery & Grower Alliance of Ontario (WGAO), the Wine Council of Ontario (WCO), the Grape Growers of Ontario (GGO) and their members today expressed disappointment with the Supreme Court of Canada’s ruling on *Her Majesty the Queen v. Gerard Comeau*. The case challenged restrictions on interprovincial trade.

“We are disappointed that this opportunity to remove interprovincial trade restrictions has been missed,” said Del Rollo, Chair of the WGAO. “This is an important issue for small, medium and the relatively large wineries in Ontario. We will continue to fight for consumers ability to order Canadian wine wherever the winery is and wherever they live in Canada. We hope whoever is elected on June 7th makes it clear that they support Ontarians and Canadians ability to order wine directly to their homes from any Canadian winery located in any province.”

“We will continue our work with the federal/provincial/territorial governments’ Alcoholic Beverages Working Group to allow interprovincial wine delivery from wineries to consumers,” said Len Pennachetti, Chair of the WCO. “This is something nine out of 10 Canadians believe should be permitted, and we eagerly await Ontario and the other provinces making this choice available to their citizens.

“We believe Canadian consumers should have access to wine made of 100% Ontario grown grapes. Grape Growers of Ontario fully supports reducing interprovincial trade barriers and retaining the role of the provincial liquor boards. Building consumer demand domestically will help grow the market for Canadian wine,” said Matthias Oppenlaender, Chair, Grape Growers of Ontario.

In October 2012, Gerard Comeau of New Brunswick purchased beer and spirits in Quebec and drove back to New Brunswick. He was charged with possessing liquor purchased from outside the province in quantities that exceeded the province’s prescribed limit, an offence under section 134 of the New Brunswick *Liquor Control Act*. The trial judge held that section 134(b) of the *Liquor Control Act* constitutes a trade barrier (violating section 121 of the Constitution Act, 1867) and dismissed the charge against Mr. Comeau. The case subsequently made its way to the Supreme Court.

Unfair interprovincial trade barriers have impeded Canada’s wine industry growth and prevented consumers from purchasing the Canadian wines of their choice. The grape and wine industry in

Ontario continues to support the LCBO who is an important partner in the overall growth of our industry in the province.

Direct-to-Consumer would lead to important growth for the country's highest value agricultural industry. Indeed, free interprovincial trade would positively impact the economy across the country. Industry research shows that for every \$1.00 spent on Canadian wine in Canada, \$3.42 in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is generated across the country.

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About the Alcoholic Beverages Working Group

The Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), which came into effect on July 1, 2017, established an Alcoholic Beverages Working Group (ABWG) made up of federal, provincial, and territorial officials. As noted on the CFTA [website](#), “the ABWG is tasked with identifying specific opportunities and recommendations to further enhance trade in alcoholic beverages within Canada, while being mindful of social responsibility and international obligations. The working group shall submit its recommendations to the Committee on Internal Trade by July 1, 2018.”

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