

National Coalition commends Ontario Government on Taking First Step in Contraband Tobacco Enforcement

Toronto – (November 16th, 2018) Yesterday, the Ontario Minister of Finance Victor Fedeli, released the Fall Economic Statement, which highlighted the government’s plan to address the province’s illegal tobacco problem. The plan notes that illegal tobacco creates an unfair business advantage, and compromises the health and public safety of Ontarians.

“Ontario continues to have the worst contraband tobacco problem in Canada with 1 in 3 cigarettes sold being illegal. We are pleased to see the Ontario Government address the concerns surrounding this illegal market,” said Gary Grant, Spokesperson for the National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco (NCACT), a 39-year veteran of the Toronto Police Service and founder of Toronto Crime Stoppers. “By acknowledging the lost revenue of \$750 million, the Government has taken the first step in creating a plan that will help recoup lost tax revenue while working towards protecting our communities from organized crime involved in the illicit trade.”

The Ministry of Finance plans on launching a public awareness campaign that informs the public about how to identify the illegal product, as well as the risks associated with participating in the industry. The ministry will also review the tobacco tax regulation and enforcement, as well as expand the Contraband Tobacco Enforcement Team – a specialized task force with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). The task force in Quebec currently comprises 54 members versus the 10 current members in Ontario.

Additionally, the ministry will also launch a tobacco enforcement grants program to incentivize regional police to pursue investigations into illegal tobacco. A similar program was initiated in Quebec several years ago that has proven to be effective. For every one dollar spent in Quebec, they make back 14 dollars in provincial excise tax revenue. These are results that will make a difference in Ontario.

“We commend the government on keeping their promise that was made during the provincial election to dedicate resources to fight organized crime, including the production and smuggling of contraband and illicit drugs, as well as child exploitation and human trafficking,” says Grant. “We are excited to move forward and work with both the Minister of Finance and the Ontario Government to ensure a decline in the illegal tobacco industry, as well return the lost tax revenue to Ontarians.”

To learn more about the NCACT and the fight against illegal tobacco in Canada, please visit <https://www.stopcontrabandtobacco.ca/>

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About NCACT

The National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco is a Canadian advocacy group formed with the participation of businesses, organizations and individuals concerned about the growing danger of contraband cigarettes. NCACT members share the goals of working together to educate people and urge government to take quick action to stop this growing threat.

The members of the NCACT are: Association des détaillants en alimentation du Québec (ADA), Association des marchands dépanneurs et épiciers du Québec (AMDEQ), Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Canadian Convenience Stores Association (CCSA), Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Canadian Taxpayers Federation, Canadian Tobacco Manufacturers Council, Conseil du patronat du Québec (CPQ), Customs and Immigration Union, Échec au crime Québec, Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec (FCCQ), Frontier Duty Free Association (FDFA), National Convenience Stores Distributors Association (NACDA), Ontario Chamber of Commerce, Retail Council of Canada, Toronto Crime Stoppers, United Korean Commerce and Industry Association (UKCIA), and National Capital Area Crime Stoppers.

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