

When Will There Be an Ontario Illegal Tobacco Enforcement Summit?

Toronto – (October 20, 2017) Today, the National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco (NCACT) highlighted the hypocrisy evident in Ontario’s Cannabis Legalization Enforcement Summit in terms of the emphasis being placed on enforcement measures to prepare for the legalisation of cannabis while calls for a similar approach to the province’s booming contraband tobacco trade have not been heeded.

“A coordinated, multi-stakeholder approach to enforcement will be an important component of the province’s effort to address cannabis, which makes the need for a similar initiative for Ontario’s well entrenched contraband tobacco market all the clearer,” said Gary Grant, the National Spokesperson for the NCACT, and a 39-year veteran of the Toronto Police Service. “The participation of multiple stakeholder groups and different levels of government in this discussion is something we’ve been advocating for in relation to the country’s illegal cigarette problem, which is by far the worst in Ontario.”

Ontario has the worst contraband tobacco market in Canada, with more than 1 in 3 cigarettes sold in the province being illegal, a rate that has barely budged for several years. In Northern Ontario, the contraband rate is more than 60%. Illegal cigarettes are cheap and readily available costing as little as \$8 for a baggie of 200 cigarettes, \$70 or more less than legal product. They are available directly from smugglers or hundreds of unlicensed retail smoke shacks. The RCMP has identified 175 criminal gangs involved in the contraband trade, which use the revenues to fund guns, drugs and human smuggling.

“The approach Ontario has taken to addressing the illegal marijuana market – enforcement and acknowledging impact of price – is the same that would be effective against illegal cigarettes,” concluded Grant. “We hope we can count on the government to give both of these issues the amount of the attention they deserve.”

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To arrange interviews with Mr. Grant, please contact:

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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. Please visit: www.stopcontrabandtobacco.ca to learn more.

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.