

Ontario to slash alcohol licensing fees for small, independent grocers

Discount part of a larger move to reduce a range of fees paid by small and mediums-sized businesses

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Ontario has announced a plan to reduce the regulatory fees paid by small, independent grocers to sell alcohol by \$2,000 per year, representing 66 per cent in savings.

The province is calling it a "first step" in a plan to reduce a range of fees paid by small and mediums-sized businesses.

- Beer sales coming to 80 more Ontario grocery stores
- Beer and cider are coming to more grocery stores in the GTA

"We heard from the small business community that the fee to sell alcohol was too high for small grocers," said Jeff Leal, minister responsible for small business, during an appearance at Toronto's Galleria Supermarket on Monday morning.

Of Ontario's 208 grocery stores licensed to sell beer, cider and wine, 44 will qualify for the reduction, the province says.

"For independent stores like Galleria, this will help us to remain competitive," said Brad Jeffrey Min, CEO of the Galleria Supermarket.

More changes coming

The fee reduction would come as part of new legislation to be introduced this fall, which the province says will provide a boost to small businesses.

If the legislation is passed, Ontario will review a host of license and registration fees currently paid by those businesses. The Liberal government will also develop a new "one-window" service to help businesses access support and resources.

"We are working towards a transformational shift in the way we approach regulations," said Brad Duguid, Minister of Economic Development and Growth. "We are committed to reducing red tape — action that will help create jobs and build a competitive business environment."

Legislators will also explore new ways to reward businesses with strong compliance records, possibly by reducing the frequency of inspections.

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