

THE MAJORITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIANS SUPPORT THE SALE OF BEER AND WINE IN CORNER GROCERY STORES



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Vancouver, BC – A survey released today conducted by Ipsos-Reid for the BC Korean Business Cooperative Association has found that the majority (56%) of British Columbians support the sale of beer and wine in select, regulated corner grocery stores. The main reason given for the support of the sale of beer and wine at corner grocery stores is the "increased convenience", followed by the fact that it is "already available at corner stores in other provinces" and that people will have "better access to beer and wine". Among the forty-two percent of British Columbians who oppose the sale of alcohol in corner grocery stores, the main reason for their opposition is the possible increase in "accessibility of alcohol to minors".

"While there is a core of opposition, people in British Columbia generally favour opening up the sale of beer and wine to select, regulated corner grocery stores. The one major concern that must be addressed is the possible easier access for youth. If this can be effectively addressed, support will likely increase further" says Rhys Gibb, Senior Research Manager with Ipsos-Reid.

Support for the sale of beer and wine in corner grocery stores is highest among men (65% versus 49% of women), and those who have a university education (63% versus 50% of those with a high school education).



While 42% opposition is a sizable number, a large portion of these opponents are people who are generally opposed to the direction of the changes to the BC liquor laws that have been introduced since the BC Liberals took office last May. When asked if they are in favour or opposed to the direction of the changes introduced over the course of this summer, 35% of British Columbians are opposed to these changes, and 62% are in favour of these changes.

These are the findings of a special feature BC Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between September 4th and 11th, 2002 among a representative cross-section of 800 British Columbian adults. These data are statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional, age and sex composition reflects that of the actual BC population according to 1996 Census data. With a provincial sample of 800, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the overall results are within ± 3.5 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult BC population been polled. The margin of error will be larger for other sub-groupings of the survey population.

British Columbians Would Like the Convenience of Beer and Wine in Corner Grocery Stores

Among those who support the sale of beer and wine in corner grocery stores (56%), the most common reason given is that it will be "more convenient" (28%). The second most mentioned reason given is that they will have "easier access to alcohol" (24%), the same proportion who mention "corner store beer and wine sales are allowed in other provinces" (24%). Fewer mention "stores who sell these products can earn more revenue" (14%), "more competition will lower prices" (10%) and this initiative will "reduce government control" (10%).

While British Columbians generally support the sale of beer and wine in corner grocery stores, there are some concerns. By far, the number one reason for opposing the sale of beer and wine in corner grocery stores is that it will likely "increase accessibility of beer and wine



for youth". Of those who are opposed (35%), just over one-half (54%) give this as their reason. Other minor reasons for being opposed by this group, are that "beer and wine will be too accessible" (15%), there will be "increased health and social problems" (10%), it will be "harder to regulate" (10%) and there will be "increased beer and wine consumption" (10%).

Respondents were then presented with a list of statements for allowing the sale of beer and wine in corner grocery stores and asked whether they would agree or disagree with each one. Eighty-three-percent of British Columbians agreed that making beer and wine available in corner grocery stores will be much more convenient for people. About two-thirds (67%) agreed that allowing corner grocery stores to sell beer and wine allows them to compete more fairly with current beer and wine stores that can sell non- alcohol related products such as cigarettes and soft drinks, and about the same number (64%) agree that it should be up to individual British Columbians, not the BC government to decide when and how they can buy beer and wine. A similar number (63%) feel this will more closely meet the BC Liberal promise of a free market in BC while 61% feel that a "one strike and you're out" policy can control the sale of alcohol to minors. Fifty percent of British Columbians feel that since beer and wine is available in corner grocery stores in Quebec and the U.S., they should be allowed here.

On the other hand...

When presented with statements against allowing the sale of beer and wine in corner grocery stores, 68% of respondents agree with the issue that underage people will gain easier access to beer and wine. Also, 50% agree that allowing beer and wine to be sold in corner grocery stores may cause an increase in overall social problems.



Ipsos Reid

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