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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flying Monkeys Craft Brewery Pledges Support For Beer Sales in Convenience Stores

BARRIE, ONTARIO. As the outcry for “free and open” competition in alcohol retailing escalates, the Flying Monkeys Craft Brewery supports the Ontario Convenience Store Association’s bid to see beer sold at your local corner store.

Why are the Flying Monkeys supporting the Ontario Convenience Store Association? Peter Chiodo, Founder and Artisan brewer at Flying Monkeys explains, “We support the freedom for any beer retailer wishing to compete in the marketplace. When 80% of all the beer in this province is unfairly funneled through one foreign-owned beer-retailing cartel without any government oversight or transparency, we as Ontarians have a problem. No retailer should be prevented by his or her own government --or the Beer Store-- from competing in an open market.”

After brewers buy their way into The Beer Store network, TBS is prejudicial in the way they “retail” Craft Beer. Peter Chiodo laments, “We overreach our budgets to pay for TBS listings, but then we are relegated to the far back corners in self-serve stores, or behind ‘The Wall’ in conventional and ice-cold express stores. Already, right off the bat, certain convenience store chains have offered 30% of their beer shelf space for Craft Beers and others even guaranteed no listing fees.”

Neither the Ontario Convenience Store Association nor the Flying Monkeys wants to disband The Beer Store. The Flying Monkeys Founder is emphatic: “The government needs to grant more retailing licenses so Ontario can actually have an open and competitive retail beer market. 70% of Ontarians want an alternative beverage retailing system. It’s no wonder The Beer Store is afraid of competition: they only offer 400 brands, and most of their stores look like Stalinist era prisons from the 1940s. The shopping experience at these outlets is dismal. I could go to a typical grocery store in Ohio, beer store in Alberta, or Convenience store in Quebec and see 1000 different beers displayed fairly and openly on brightly lit shelves and in coolers.”

When asked about selling beer in convenience stores Chiodo comments, “Public Will for beer in convenient stores is quite apparent. How can the government ignore the largest petition ever with over 403,000 signatures fully supporting the sale of alcohol in convenience stores? It makes no sense to me.” The only explanation is that big breweries have successfully ingratiated themselves with the government and lobbied to maintain their control for decades.

“Any opposition in the media by The Beer Store can’t be taken seriously,” says Chiodo. “The Beer Store owners are funneling at least \$700 million a year in profits out of our country. They will tilt, distort, and twist data in the most self-serving manner possible to protect their monopoly and prevent competition.”

The Beer Store’s apocalyptic picture of underage drinking, alcoholism in epidemic proportions, and skyrocketing beer prices is alarmist and wrong. In fact, the opposite is true. Data from a Canadian Addiction Research paper proves scarcity in access points may actually be the problem with *higher* ‘heavy-drinking’ rates reported in Ontario than in Alberta, Quebec, or B.C. – all provinces with ‘open and fair’ beverage alcohol markets.

What does the future for beer retailing look like in Ontario? Peter Chiodo bleakly points out, “It will continue to be grim unless we –both brewers and consumers-- loudly advocate for free and competitive retailing of beer at the Convenience Stores, Grocery Stores, Big Box stores, Specialty Beer Stores, LCBO, *and* TBS stores.” In the 21st Century, the beer-retailing model in Ontario is beyond antiquated.

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