



Office of the Regional Chair
1151 Bronte Road
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VIA EMAIL ONLY

May 3, 2023

The Honourable Anita Anand, MP, Oakville
The Honourable Michael Chong, MP, Wellington-Halton Hills
Pam Damoff, MP, Oakville-North Burlington
The Honourable Karina Gould, MP, Burlington
Adam van Koeverden, MP, Milton

On behalf of Halton Regional Council, I am writing to express support for Bill [S-254, An Act to amend the Food and Drugs Act \(warning label on alcoholic beverages\)](#), which calls on the Federal Government to implement warning labels on alcoholic beverages showing standard drink information, health advice and the link between alcohol and cancer.

Alcohol use is a significant but modifiable risk factor for chronic disease and is a leading risk factor for disease, disability, and premature death in Canada. Bill S-254, aligns with Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health, which recommends that Health Canada "[require, through regulation, the mandatory labelling of all alcoholic beverages to list the number of standard drinks in a container, the Guidance on Alcohol and Health, health warnings and nutrition information.](#)"

This recommendation is based on the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addictions' systematic review of enhanced alcohol container labelling. This policy is also supported by [Evidence-based Recommendations for Labelling Alcohol Products in Canada](#) developed by the [Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation \(CAPE\) project](#) researchers, who have been leaders in the alcohol policy field for over 10 years. Alcohol warning labels are used around the world, including Australia, Thailand and France. Within Canada, there was a recent study in Yukon which demonstrated the positive [impact of warning labels](#).

According to a 2020 report on [Canadian Substance Use Costs and Harms](#), alcohol use cost Canada \$16.6 billion and was responsible for more than 18,000 deaths in 2017. Public Health Ontario estimates that annually there is an average of 4,330 alcohol attributable deaths occurring in Ontario, and in Halton an average of 5,546 emergency department visits attributable to alcohol among residents aged 15 and over. Effective federal policy and regulation of alcohol are supportive in reducing mortality, morbidity and burden on our hospitals and healthcare system.

The implementation of federally mandated labels on all alcohol containers sold in Canada represents an important step to better inform the community about the health risks of alcohol and hold alcohol companies to the same standard as other regulated drugs, including tobacco and cannabis. This is especially important given that the majority of Canadians are unaware that alcohol is [classified by the WHO as a Group 1 carcinogen](#) and causes seven different types of cancer including breast and colon.

Regional Municipality of Halton

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Alcohol warning labels placed directly on alcohol containers also provide consumers with easy-to-use information and allows them to accurately track and monitor their alcohol use in terms of standard drinks. This information is essential if individuals are to effectively reduce their alcohol consumption as recommended in [Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health](#). Data from the 2019/20 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) shows that in 2019/20, 31% of Halton adults aged 19 and over reported consuming more than two standard alcoholic drinks per week, in excess of the new guidelines, putting them at an elevated risk for harms. Without understanding standard drinks and reasons why they should modify their consumption, people are unlikely to follow the guidance.

In summary, Halton Regional Council supports Bill S-254 to implement warning labels on alcoholic beverages. All Canadians should be supported in making healthy and safe choices. The measures outlined in Bill S-254, if approved will protect the health and well-being of Canadians now and for future generations.

At its meeting held Wednesday, April 19, 2023, the Council of the Regional Municipality of Halton adopted the following resolution:

RESOLUTION: MO-08-23 – Alcohol and Health

1. THAT the Regional Chair send a letter of support to Halton's MP's for legislation including warnings on Alcohol labelling as outlined in Report No. MO-08-23;
2. AND THAT a copy of such letter be forwarded to the Honourable Senator Patrick Brazeau, PC, the Honourable Senator Robert Black, PC, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for their consideration.

Attached please find a copy of Report No. MO-08-23 for your information.

Sincerely,



Gary Carr
Regional Chair

Cc. The Honourable, Senator Patrick Brazeau, PC
The Honourable, Senator Robert Black, PC
Carole Saab, Federation of Canadian Municipalities