vinetur

Doug Ford refuses to restore U.S. alcohol sales in Ontario until Washington lifts tariffs

A new congressional bill seeks a trade investigation as the dispute threatens a major cross-border beverage market

Thursday, July 9, 2026



Ontario Premier Doug Ford said his government will not reverse its restrictions on U.S. alcohol unless Washington removes tariffs on Canadian goods, escalating a trade dispute that is now drawing new attention in Congress and across the beverage industry.

In a post on X, Ford said Ontario would not yield to a proposed U.S. measure aimed at challenging Canadian limits on American beer, wine and spirits. “We won’t back down,” he wrote, arguing that U.S. tariffs are threatening the jobs of hundreds of thousands of Canadian workers, including many in Ontario. He added that the “fastest and only way” to get U.S. alcohol back onto Ontario store shelves is for the United States to drop what he called illegal tariffs on Canada.

Ford’s response came after Representative Claudia Tenney, a New York Republican, introduced legislation Monday called the Combating Attacks on our National Alcoholic Drinks by Allies Act, or CANADA Act. If enacted, the bill would direct the office of U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer to open an investigation within 30 days under Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act into provincial liquor board restrictions in Canada that affect the import and distribution of American alcoholic beverages.

Tenney said in a release that nearly all of Canada’s provincial liquor boards have prohibited or restricted American alcohol imports, hurting U.S. producers and limiting access to an important export market. The proposal adds a new layer of pressure to a dispute that began after President Donald Trump imposed tariffs last year, prompting several Canadian provinces to retaliate by pulling or restricting U.S. alcohol products.

According to Global News, eight Canadian provinces adopted some form of restriction on U.S. alcohol imports after those tariffs were announced. In Ontario, American alcohol was officially removed from Liquor Control Board of Ontario shelves on March 4, 2025, as part of the province’s response to the first round of Trump tariffs.

Before the ban, Ontario imported about $965 million worth of alcohol from the United States. Provincial officials have said roughly $2 million worth of those products either expired or were expected to expire in the following months. Most of the affected inventory consisted of beer, ready-to-drink beverages and wine.

The dispute matters well beyond politics because it directly affects one of the largest cross-border beverage markets in North America. A Section 301 investigation could increase pressure on provincial alcohol systems and potentially reshape access for U.S. wineries, brewers and distillers trying to sell into Canada. At the same time, Canadian producers and retailers remain tied to broader tariff negotiations that go far beyond

beverage sales.

Ford has linked any return of American alcohol to wider trade talks between Ottawa and Washington. During a visit to Washington in June, he said U.S. products would be sold again in Ontario once the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement is renewed. Speaking to reporters on June 9, he said he wanted to get a deal done and promised that once an agreement was reached he would move to bring “all the booze back on shelves in Ontario.”

The issue has also spread beyond Ontario. In Quebec, members of Congress from California recently urged provincial officials to restore access for American wine. In a letter cited by Global News, Representatives Jimmy Panetta, Mike Thompson and David G. Valadao said Quebec’s restrictions had harmed consumers, businesses and producers who had no role in national trade policy.

The lawmakers said Quebec consumers had long enjoyed broad access to American wines and argued that their removal reduced consumer choice while cutting off a $434 million market. They called reopening the province’s market to U.S. wine a step toward fairer trade and a possible signal that both sides are willing to work toward a resolution.

For now, however, Ford’s position remains firm: no return of U.S. alcohol to Ontario shelves without movement from Washington on tariffs. That leaves American beverage exporters facing continued barriers in one of their most valuable nearby markets while trade officials on both sides weigh whether the fight over bottles on store shelves could become part of a much larger commercial confrontation.