

## Minister Blackburn announces new measures to combat tobacco smuggling

Ottawa, Ontario, April 7, 2009. . . The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Agriculture), today announced new measures that the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) is taking to combat tobacco smuggling. He announced the decisions when he was a guest speaker at a Canadian Convenience Stores Association event.

Minister Blackburn noted that smokers who buy smuggled tobacco products are not aware that it is illegal. “Smokers need to know that they are encouraging organized crime by buying smuggled tobacco. So I have asked the CRA to plan an advertising campaign. We will tell smokers what impact smuggling has on society.”

The Minister also made decisions on managing and allocating licences to manufacture tobacco. “I recently had in-depth discussions with the CRA specialists who handle licence distribution. I am announcing that I have asked that no new licences be issued without my authorization,” added Minister Blackburn.

The Minister is instituting an even stricter process for granting licences. “I want the best possible exchange of information with the RCMP across the entire licensing regime. To help ensure we have as much exchange of information as practical, I have asked the RCMP to advise us on whether or not we should issue a licence. While fully respecting the confidentiality provisions, this process of exchanging information must continue throughout the duration of a licence, allowing me, as Minister, to make the necessary decisions to issue, revoke, or suspend a licence.”

Finally, Minister Blackburn indicated that his agenda will include meetings with his counterparts in Quebec and Ontario. “These provinces are most impacted by this blight. I want to make sure that we’re on the same page. No action we take will be effective if it doesn’t have the support of the provincial governments,” he concluded.

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