

Controlling Contraband in Ontario: Needs, Challenges & Options

Countering Contraband: 2nd Bi-National Conference
on the Illicit Tobacco Trade

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Ontario: Today's Environment

- No public education
- Federal vs. provincial vs. First Nations: Who's on first?
- First Nations: Economic/social disparities
- Doubling of Ontario tobacco crop
- Legacies of Ipperwash and Caledonia
- Unequal involvement of all levels of law enforcement
- Ease of community access to illegal product

Needs, Actions & Challenges

Federal/Tri-lateral

- Political: PM to President to (AFN?)?
- Is contraband a priority in context of talks re: border security/terrorism/drug and gun running?
- Contraband as a “serious offence” under the Criminal Code?
- Public education: CRA campaign

CRA Test Campaign



Criminal organizations control you...with contraband cigarettes

You might think it's smart or cool to buy contraband cigarettes, but actually you could be used and manipulated by criminal organizations. You don't realize it, but criminals use your money to finance other activities, from drugs and weapons trafficking to prostitution. Don't be a puppet in the hands of criminal gangs.

CRA Test Campaign



Contraband cigarettes: the hidden face of organized crime

It is a well known fact that organized crime is involved in trafficking guns and drugs, money laundering and prostitution. What is less known is that they can also control the distribution and sale of contraband cigarettes, which it uses to support its other criminal activities. Before you buy contraband cigarettes, think about the hidden costs.

CRA Test Campaign



Contraband cigarettes: they're everyone's concern.

Many who purchase contraband cigarettes see it as a victimless crime. But the truth is organized crime uses the money it makes from contraband cigarettes to finance its other illegal activities. Activities that put your neighbourhood at risk. Be part of the solution...don't welcome contraband cigarettes into your community.

CRA Test Campaign



Contraband cigarettes breed violence

Contraband cigarettes are often controlled by criminal gangs. The more people buy contraband cigarettes, the more these gangs will work their way into your community – bringing criminal activity and violence with them. The best way to fight back is simple. Don't buy contraband cigarettes.

Youth Focus Group Reactions

- Contraband extremely common among youth/young adults: some view purchase as helpful to low/limited income producers and sellers
- Awareness of illegality, but little concern because so common
- Most not opposed to sale, assume that profit goes to those making/selling
- Compared to prostitution, drugs, guns, what's the big deal?
- Link to organized crime not clear, “far-fetched”.
- “How does this make my neighbourhood unsafe?”
- Campaign viewed as futile since purchasers buy due to low price.

Needs, Actions & Challenges

Ontario :Priorities

- Increase local/regional seizure authority via Provincial Offences Act Part 1: maximum return for minimum effort; product ID via cards or in-car computers
- Ban on supply of raw leaf tobacco (other raw materials?) to unlicensed manufacturers
 - In place in Quebec since 2005: seizures completed, no negative reaction
 - Who is licensed? By whom?
- Seizure of vehicles transporting contraband

Needs, Actions & Challenges

Provincial/Ontario Priorities (cont'd)

- Address on-reserve economics: FN tobacco....fee?
- Reform of the allocation system to limit supply of legal product to amount actually required by FNs
- Intensive public education campaign focused on youth access/undermining of provincial tobacco control strategy