

Town of Orangeville
87 Broadway
Orangeville ON L9W 1K1

Dear Mayor Sandy Brown and Town Council,

As you may have heard in the news, 7-Eleven, a multinational corporation headquartered in Texas, has filed 61 liquor licenses in 31 municipalities with the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. They are asking to be allowed to serve beer and wine for on-site consumption in their stores as they deem themselves as qualifying “restaurants”, this includes a site in Orangeville at 268 Broadway, **which is located within a gas station**. In effect, they are turning their overpriced corporate corner stores and gas stations into bars. And when it comes to serving and selling alcohol, convenience is not at all an attribute.

The economic devastation of the global pandemic has caused small restaurants, businesses, and workers to struggle financially. Already so many local businesses have had to close their doors permanently to the public. Now, we find that many struggling restaurants are expected to compete with another multinational corporation that could potentially put them out of business. There is no guarantee that a conglomerate like 7-Eleven, which has defined itself as a restaurant, will follow the associated rules of a restaurant and if the rules will even apply to them.

Compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic, alcohol consumption in Ontario has increased by 30%. Surveys from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research have found that the increases in alcohol consumption are often connected to and exacerbate issues with depression, higher anxiety and feelings of loneliness. There is also evidence from the World Health Organization that suggests a connection between increased availability and consumption of alcohol to intimate partner violence and violence within families. Violence that has only increased since the onset of the pandemic -- upto 30% in some areas. Further, prior to COVID-19, alcohol consumption was a leading cause of mortality and morbidity among adults aged 15 to 49. The loosening of restrictions on alcohol consumption in our community, such as through 7-Elevens, will likely result in immediate and long-term public health issues increasing the burden on our already struggling public healthcare system.

Over the past 15 years, research from MADD indicates that the public does not want to see alcohol become more readily available. 7-Elevens are open 24 hours a day, with a typically underpaid and minimally trained young staff, who may find themselves in a difficult position to refuse an intoxicated customer, increasing the likelihood of drinking and driving. Furthermore, the 7-Eleven in question is located less than a 10 minute walking distance from two schools. With the easier accessibility to alcohol, underage drinking as well as alcohol-related crime and misconduct will increase in the surrounding family filled neighbourhoods. If the 7-Eleven applications are successful there will be dire consequences that will make our Orangeville community less safe.

We as the Orangeville and District Labour Council are asking you to take action. We are calling on the Municipality of Orangeville to unanimously reject the proposal by 7-Eleven to sell alcohol for on-site consumption at its convenience store in our Orangeville Community. We also ask you to write your own letter to the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario officially condemning the 7-Eleven proposal.

Thank you,

The Orangeville and District Labour Council

Orangeville Against Drunk Driving

UFCW 12R24

Arrive Alive