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Province to permit ?bring-your-own? alcoholic beverages at municipally approved public events

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The Ontario government is expanding ?bring-your-own' event permits for municipally designated cultural or community outdoor public events, including farmer's markets, movie screenings, art exhibits and neighbourhood festivals.

The expanded permit will allow attendees of these events to bring their own alcohol for consumption in designated areas.

It's important to note that the permitting expansion does not mean patrons of any event can bring their own alcoholic beverages from home. This permit is only eligible in municipalities that approve it and at events where the organizer applies for it.

The province says this will help support local tourism and drive economic growth.

?Starting this spring, Ontario is giving communities more flexibility to safely and responsibly enjoy cultural and outdoor events,? said Attorney General Doug Downey. ?The ?bring-your-own' event permits will help save attendees money, lower overhead costs for event organizers and contribute to local economies.?

Municipalities will be required to pass a bylaw authorizing the use of alcohol in public if they do not already have one in place. A municipality must establish a local process to determine whether an event qualifies as a community or cultural event and is therefore eligible for the ?bring-your-own' permit.

Beginning April 30 of this year, event organizers in participating municipalities will be able to apply for bring-your-own permits through the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario.

?Our government is always working to find new ways to empower local communities, boost economic activity and increase tourism,? said Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance. ?By giving Ontario municipalities the choice to make use of this new initiative, our government is directly contributing to their economic well-being while ensuring adults can continue to safely and responsibly enjoy their favourite products.?

The ?bring-your-own' permit change will be enabled by an amendment to a regulation under the Liquor Licence and Control Act, giving community and cultural organizations greater flexibility ahead of the spring and summer event season.

Previously, only organizers of live sporting events could obtain this type of permit, typically used for tailgating.

Only individuals 19 years of age and older will be allowed to bring alcohol to events holding a ?bring-your-own' event permit.

The province will continue to work closely with the AGCO to uphold existing rigorous standards for licensing, regulation and social responsibility, ensuring events are safe and reflect community priorities.