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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **The challenge to a Quebec law by California winemakers was predictable**

CUPE had warned the Quebec Government that the *Act respecting development of the small-scale alcoholic beverage industry* missed its mark and would not foster the growth of the industry in Quebec. On the contrary, this Act is undermining regulation of the alcoholic beverages market.

Quebec producers can now sell their wines directly to grocery stores, bypassing the Quebec liquor board [Société des alcools du Québec – SAQ]. California winemakers are objecting to what they see as an unfair advantage.

"Once again, weakening Quebec's monopoly is the target of the California demand. That is clearly the purport of the wine producers' challenge. Finance Minister Carlos Leitão, who is in charge of the file, didn't listen to our warning and this is exactly what is happening," said Patrick Lessard, president of the union of SAQ warehouse, technical and delivery workers (CUPE 3535).

Annual sales of Quebec products in Quebec total just 600,000 bottles, as compared to 17 million bottles of California products.

Quebec does authorize the sale of foreign wines in grocery stores, but only if they are bottled in Quebec.

"The producers are never satisfied. CUPE expressed concern about Bill 88, tabled last May, as it opens the door to the liberalisation of the alcoholic beverage market. And that's exactly what's happening, endangering an excellent source of revenue for the Government," concluded Bruno Tremblay, union advisor on the file.

With more than 110,000 members in Quebec, CUPE represents some 3,800 members in government corporations and public agencies. CUPE is also present in the following sectors: health and social services, communications, education, universities, energy, municipalities, air and urban transport, and the mixed sector.