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Wine Institute Joins ABL as Associate Member

Membership strengthens connection to independent beverage retailers, California wineries

Bethesda, MD – August 25, 2015 – American Beverage Licensees (ABL) is pleased to welcome Wine Institute as its newest Associate Member. Representing more than 1,000 wineries and affiliated businesses, Wine Institute is the largest advocacy and public policy association for California wineries and the only trade association representing the wine industry at the state, federal and international levels.

“Wine consumption in the U.S. has increased every year since 2000 and beverage licensees have been part of that growth,” said John Bodnovich, ABL’s Executive Director. “Wine retailers have a long history of successfully promoting and selling California wines. We’re excited to work more closely with Wine Institute in areas of public policy where our organizations’ missions align and to grow on- and off-premise licensees’ awareness of California wines.

Wine Institute works to create an environment where the wine community can flourish and contribute in a positive fashion to the nation, state and local communities. This means bringing together the resources of its members to support legislative and regulatory advocacy, international market development, media relations, scientific research, and education programs that benefit the entire California wine industry.

“I’m pleased that Wine Institute will be in a position to work even more closely with ABL, its member companies and local affiliates on initiatives that benefit our respective interests,” said Robert Koch, President and CEO of Wine Institute. “ABL is an important constituency for our California wineries and we’re all stronger when we have open lines of communication and cooperation.”

Wine Institute is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of 80 California vintners who are served by a professional staff with offices in San Francisco, Sacramento, Washington DC, six U.S. regional offices and representation in seven foreign countries. With a strong presence in Washington, D.C., Wine Institute aggressively advocates for its members’ interests in tax, international trade, legislative and regulatory issues. Wine Institute also pursues numerous programs and community alliances and promotes sustainable business practices from the ground to the bottle. ABL and Wine Institute have worked together in the past to support funding of the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB), have opposed excise tax increases and advocated for sensible approaches to fight drunk driving.

California is a leading producer of wine, representing approximately 90 percent of all American wine. It produces 60 percent of all wine sold in the United States and ranks fourth in world wine production behind only France, Italy and Spain. The Golden State grows wine grapes in more than 80 percent of its counties, and is home to 4,400 wineries that generated \$24.6 billion in revenues in 2014.

“Wine is an important part of the beverage marketplace, and retailers want to stay informed on issues affecting wineries,” said Bodnovich. “Wine Institute’s membership is a great opportunity to connect winemakers and retailers to strengthen our industry.”

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American Beverage Licensees is the preeminent national trade association for beverage alcohol retailers. Direct retail beverage alcohol sales in the United States generate as many as 1.77 million well-paying jobs. ABL’s thousands of on-premise and off-premise licensee members are independent and often family-owned establishments. The beverage retailing industry pays over \$19.3 billion in federal taxes and \$16.9 billion in state and local taxes. To learn more about ABL, visit www.ablusa.org.

Wine Institute is the public policy advocacy association of California wineries. Wine Institute brings together the resources of 1,000 wineries and affiliated businesses to support legislative and regulatory advocacy, international market development, media relations, scientific research, and education programs that benefit the entire California wine industry. To learn more about Wine Institute, visit www.wineinstitute.org.