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## **Beverage Alcohol Representatives Participate in Capitol Hill Briefing on Industry Social Responsibility Programs**

Event Hosted by Congressional Responsible Hospitality Caucus

**May 10, 2016 – Bethesda, MD** – Representatives from American Beverage Licensees (ABL), the Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) and The Presidents' Forum of the Distilled Spirits Industry (The Presidents' Forum) yesterday participated in a panel discussion on industry social responsibility programs hosted by the Congressional Responsible Hospitality Caucus.

The Caucus is a recognized congressional organization co-chaired by Rep. Sean Duffy (R-Wisc.) and Rep. Derek Kilmer (D-Wash.). It promotes the country's licensed and regulated hospitality industry by educating elected officials and their staff members about the role of licensed businesses in the hospitality industry as well as the importance of an effective framework of state and federal regulations that govern the industry.

The briefing was held in the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center and was designed to provide elected officials, staff members and media representatives with an overview of the many ways beverage alcohol companies, public agencies, associations and local communities work jointly across all tiers of the industry to promote social responsibility in communities across the country. Panelists included: Pete Madland, Tavern League of Wisconsin; Mike Rowe, Virginia Imports, Ltd.; and Kathie Durbin, Montgomery County Department of Liquor Control.

Madland discussed the importance of private industries and governments working together in decreasing accidents and DUIs, by highlighting local Safe Ride programs for patrons. Rowe outlined the behind the scenes role played by wholesalers and their work to support responsible beverage service training and practices. Durbin provided examples of the many ways industry regulatory bodies work closely with regulated licensees in all tiers.

"As those who are the last to handle beer, wine and spirits before they reach the hands of the consumers, licensed beverage retailers understand the important role they play when it comes to selling beverage alcohol responsibly," said John Bodnovich, Executive Director of American Beverage Licensees. "We're thrilled that the Congressional Responsible Hospitality Caucus is highlighting some of the effective programs that our industry is using to prevent the abuse and misuse of its products."

"Wine and spirits wholesalers are dedicated to promoting the legal, safe and responsible consumption of beverage alcohol," said WSWA President and CEO Craig Wolf. "It's important that we remind elected officials and their staff about the industry's economic impact as well its commitment to social responsibility in communities around the country."

"Member companies and associations representing all three tiers of the beverage alcohol industry have long worked to promote social responsibility," said Vicky McDowell, President and CEO of The Presidents' Forum of the Distilled Spirits Industry. "Today's briefing was a prime opportunity to educate our elected officials and their staff about this work and help them learn first-hand from those in the field, the details of this important work."

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**ABL** 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](http://www.ablusa.org).

**WSWA** is the national trade association representing the wholesale tier of the wine and spirits industry, dedicated to advancing the interests and independence of wholesalers, distributors and brokers of wine and spirits. Founded in 1943, WSWA has 379 member companies in 50 states and the District of Columbia, and its members distribute more than 80 percent of all wine and spirits sold at wholesale in the United States. More information is available at [www.wswa.org](http://www.wswa.org).

**The Presidents' Forum** is the national trade association representing manufacturers, importers and marketers of distilled spirits in the United States. The member companies represent over 50% of all distilled spirits sales in the United States.