



August 7, 2026

Welcome to your **ABL Friday Happy Hour** ... *680 words ... 2-3 minutes*. Here's the latest on legislative policy, industry developments, and other news affecting beverage alcohol retailers.

1. Senate CR With Hemp Language Hangs in the Balance

At this hour, the U.S. Senate continues to negotiate a short-term continuing resolution (CR) to keep the federal government funded beyond the September 30 deadline. Lawmakers have not reached final agreement, and an amendment has been introduced that would strip a provision from the CR to extend the current federal definition of hemp through December 11 for naturally occurring cannabinoids. Under the bill language, synthetic cannabinoids would remain scheduled for redefinition on the original November 12 timeline.

- **Why it matters:** Without an extension, the revised federal hemp definition is scheduled to take effect in November, creating significant uncertainty for regulated hemp beverage markets while Congress continues debating a longer-term federal framework. ABL has [urged](#) Congress to adopt the Senate language, arguing that a temporary extension provides more time to develop comprehensive national standards while avoiding unnecessary disruption to states that have established regulated hemp markets.

2. ABL Advocacy Intensifies on Federal Hemp Extension

Over the past week, ABL expanded its advocacy efforts in support of the Senate proposal to extend the federal hemp implementation deadline. On August 4, ABL sent a [letter](#) to congressional leadership urging lawmakers to retain the Senate provision, arguing that the extension would preserve the ban on synthetic intoxicating cannabinoids while providing Congress additional time to develop a comprehensive federal regulatory framework for hemp-derived THC products. The following day, ABL [joined](#) a broad coalition – including WSWA, NACS, the Hemp Beverage Alliance, CABA, BAMCO, and Beverage Wholesalers for Responsible Regulation – in calling on congressional leaders to adopt the extension.

- **Why it matters:** With Congress working to reconcile competing House and Senate continuing resolution proposals, the hemp extension has become a pressing policy issues facing the beverage alcohol industry. ABL continues to advocate for a federal framework that preserves state authority,



strengthens consumer protections, prohibits synthetic intoxicants, and recognizes licensed, age-restricted beverage alcohol retailers as the most accountable channel for the sale of hemp-derived THC beverages.

3. Credit Card Competition Act Gets a Boost—Twice

The bipartisan Credit Card Competition Act (CCCA) ([H.R. 7035](#); [S. 3623](#)) garnered attention this week with high-profile support from both the White House and Capitol Hill. President Trump [reiterated](#) his endorsement of the legislation in a Truth Social post praising Sen. Roger Marshall (R-KS) for "working tirelessly to pass the Credit Card Competition Act, in order to stop the out of control Swipe Fee ripoff!" Days later, Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL), the bill's Democratic sponsor, used a Senate Judiciary hearing to call for a "crackdown" on swipe fees, arguing that they have become one of retailers' largest operating expenses and ultimately drive up prices for consumers.

- **Why it matters:** The bipartisan backing from President Trump and Sen. Durbin keeps the CCCA in the spotlight as Congress looks for legislative vehicles later this year. ABL continues to support the bill because it would introduce competition into the credit card processing market, helping reduce the excessive swipe fees that cost merchants – and ultimately consumers – billions of dollars each year.

4. NHTSA Continues Research on In-Car Drunk Driving Detection Technology

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is [launching](#) a new research project to better understand how future vehicles could detect when a driver is impaired by alcohol and warn them before they drive. The study will involve volunteers consuming alcohol in a controlled setting so researchers can evaluate different technologies that detect alcohol or recognize signs of impaired driving. NHTSA says the project is intended to gather information and is not part of a new regulation or mandate.

- **Why it matters:** The research comes as Congress continues debating whether the federal government should require this type of technology in future vehicles. Legislation has been introduced to repeal the 2021 requirement directing NHTSA to develop impaired-driving detection technology, arguing the systems raise concerns about privacy, cybersecurity, and whether the technology is ready for widespread use.