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ABL WEEKLY

POLICY, INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS NEWS
FOR BEVERAGE RETAILERS

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Calendar

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| June 14-17 | NCSLA Annual Conference – New Orleans, LA |
| June 15-17 | Beverage Alcohol Retailers Conference – Minneapolis, MN |
| June 15-17 | Cheers Beverage Summit – Minneapolis, MN |
| July 15-16 | Brewers Association Annual Hill Climb – Washington, DC |
| July 18-20 | Texas Package Stores Association Annual Convention & Trade Show – San Antonio, TX |
| July 19-24 | Tales of the Cocktail – New Orleans, LA |
| July 21-22 | American Craft Spirits Association Legislative Fly-In – Washington, DC |
| August 18-19 | American Distilling Institute Conference – Miami Beach, FL |
| August 24-26 | Center for Alcohol Policy - Alcohol Law & Policy Conference – Minneapolis, MN |
| September 17-18 | WSWA Women’s Leadership Conference – Washington, DC |
| September 20-22 | Illinois Licensed Beverage Assoc. Convention & Trade Show – Springfield, IL |
| September 21-23 | Montana Tavern Association Annual Trade Show & Convention – Anaconda, MT |
| September 28-29 | WSWA Annual Membership Forum – Chicago, IL |
| October 4-8 | Tavern League of Wisconsin Fall Convention & Trade Show – Wisconsin Dells, WI |
| October 4-8 | Wine & Spirits Guild of America Meeting – Willamette Valley, OR |
| October 8 | 43rd Annual Market Watch Leaders Awards Banquet – New York, NY |
| October 11-14 | NBWA 89th Annual Convention & Product Showcase – Orlando, FL |

October 13	New York State Liquor Store Association Holiday Trade Show – Albany, NY
October 13-14	BREW & Alliance for Women in Beer: Making Moves – Orlando, FL
October 15	New York State Liquor Store Association Holiday Trade Show – Buffalo, NY
October 19-20	Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S. Legislative & Board Meeting – Washington, DC
October 19-20	Tennessee Wine & Spirits Retailers Association Annual Conference – Nashville, TN
October 28	New Jersey Liquor Stores Association Trade Show – Edison, NJ

Let's Get Federal

- [Twist In 6th Circuit \(Ohio\) Retail Shipping Case, Off To The Supreme Court](#) – *Alcohol Law Review***

Ohio has formally petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court to review *Block v. Canepa*, the retailer shipping case in which the Sixth Circuit struck down Ohio's law allowing in-state retailers, but not out-of-state retailers, to ship wine directly to Ohio consumers. The state bypassed en banc review despite an earlier Sixth Circuit decision reaching the opposite conclusion. If accepted, the case could become the most significant alcohol-law case before the Supreme Court since *Tennessee Wine* and may shape the future of retailer shipping, state alcohol regulatory authority, and Dormant Commerce Clause challenges nationwide.
- [Credit Unions Score Illinois Swipe Fee Shield](#) – *Bloomberg Government***

The National Credit Union Administration determined that federally chartered credit unions are not subject to Illinois' Interchange Fee Prohibition Act, concluding that federal credit unions enjoy the same preemption authority as national banks. The Illinois law seeks to prohibit interchange fees from being assessed on the tax and gratuity portions of credit and debit card transactions. The decision underscores the legal and federal preemption challenges facing state-level swipe fee reforms and arrives as merchants continue advocating for passage of the Credit Card Competition Act and related interchange fee reforms.
- [New York Decides on Surveillance Pricing Ban As Colorado Governor Vetoes](#) – *Consumer Reports***

New York lawmakers approved the One Fair Price Act, legislation that would prohibit companies from using consumers' personal data to charge different prices for identical products. The bill now heads to Gov. Kathy Hochul after lawmakers removed a private right of action before final passage. Meanwhile, Colorado Gov. Jared Polis

vetoed similar legislation. The debate reflects growing scrutiny of algorithmic pricing, AI-driven consumer data use, and marketplace transparency.

- [**Support for H.R. 2853, The Combatting Retail Crime Act**](#) – *U.S. Chamber of Commerce*
Retailers, manufacturers, transportation providers, and supply-chain stakeholders continue urging the Senate to advance House-passed legislation establishing a federal coordination center to combat organized retail and supply-chain crime. Supporters argue the legislation would strengthen law enforcement coordination and address increasingly sophisticated theft operations affecting retailers nationwide.

Legal & Regulatory

- [**Restaurants, spirits firm slam potential ABC pricing change**](#) – *Business North Carolina*
Sazerac and the North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association are opposing a proposal under consideration by the North Carolina ABC Commission that could establish minimum baseline pricing for distilled spirits. Industry stakeholders argue the proposal could limit competition and raise questions about the Commission's authority.
- [**Total Wine Operator Says Pay Transparency Class Is Ruinous**](#) – *Law360 (\$)*
Total Wine & More is facing a proposed class action alleging violations of Washington state's pay transparency law. The case highlights growing compliance obligations facing large employers as states continue expanding wage disclosure and employment transparency requirements.
- [**Virginia requires state approval before new wine and beer can reach store shelves**](#) – *Vinetur*
Virginia regulators continue exercising broad authority over new product approvals, illustrating how state-level review processes remain a significant factor even after federal label approval has been secured. Regulators maintain authority to reject labels deemed misleading or otherwise inconsistent with state requirements.

Industry

- [**California Retail Institution K&L Sets Up Shop In New York**](#) – *Shanken News Daily*
California-based K&L Wine Merchants has opened its first East Coast location in New York City after acquiring the former Park Avenue Liquors space. The move brings one

of the country's most influential independent wine retailers into one of the nation's largest fine wine markets.

- [**That regional hero has masstige appeal**](#) – *Wine Business*
Treasury Wine Estates announced plans to reduce its portfolio from 76 brands to fewer than 30 while cutting SKU count by more than half. The company said it intends to focus resources on luxury brands, no- and low-alcohol products, and select growth brands.
- [**World Cup offers drinks trade a much-needed boost**](#) – *The Drinks Business*
Industry analysts continue pointing to the FIFA World Cup as one of the beverage alcohol industry's strongest sales opportunities. Beer Institute survey data found that 67% of watch-party hosts plan to serve beer during tournament events.
- [**NBWA Expands BREW Initiative, Embraces Bold Vision for Its Next Era**](#) – *NBWA*
The National Beer Wholesalers Association announced an expanded vision for its BREW initiative, now titled Building Relationships and Empowering Women + Workforce. The program will continue supporting women in beer distribution while broadening access to professional development resources for distributor employees across a wider range of roles and experience levels.

Cannabis & THC

- [**Amendments To Keep Hemp THC Products Federally Legal Won't Get Votes After Congressional Committee Blocks Them**](#) – *Marijuana Moment*
Three Republican-backed efforts to modify federal hemp cannabinoid restrictions scheduled to take effect November 12 were blocked by the House Rules Committee, preventing floor votes on proposals from Reps. Andy Barr, James Comer, and Russell Fry. Barr's proposal would have established a federally regulated market for intoxicating hemp products featuring FDA milligram limits, labeling requirements, TTB oversight, user fees, and a distribution structure modeled on alcohol.
 - [**Hightails, LLC Announces Strategic Partnership with Spirited Insiders to Accelerate National Growth of THC Beverage Portfolio**](#) – *BevNET*
Several THC beverage producers announced new distribution agreements and market expansions this week, highlighting continued investment in the category even as lawmakers and regulators debate future federal and state oversight frameworks.
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Tariff Talk

- [Trump tariff case has a new twist: He wants to keep the money](#) – *Politico*
Litigation surrounding President Trump's tariff program continues to raise questions about whether the federal government may retain tariff collections if courts ultimately determine portions of the program were improperly imposed. The dispute remains important for importers, suppliers, and retailers evaluating trade costs, refund procedures, and future tariff exposure.
 - [Doug Ford says he'll cancel U.S. booze ban if CUSMA deal is renewed](#) – *Toronto Star*
Ontario officials indicated restrictions affecting U.S. alcohol products could be revisited if broader trade discussions advance successfully. The comments offer a potential pathway toward restoring access for American beverage alcohol products.
 - [Wine Institute Delegation Presses for Urgent Action to Return U.S. Wine to Canadian Shelves](#) – *Wine Institute*
Wine Institute representatives continue urging policymakers to address barriers affecting American wine sales in Canada, which had been the industry's largest export market before provincial restrictions were imposed.
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Associate Member Spotlight



Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA)

The Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) is the national trade association representing wine and spirits wholesalers across the United States. Founded in 1943, WSWA advocates on federal and state policy issues, promotes a modern and efficient beverage alcohol marketplace, and supports the responsible distribution of beverage alcohol products through the three-tier system. WSWA members distribute the vast majority of wine and spirits sold in the United States and play a critical role connecting suppliers, retailers, and consumers. [Visit WSWA »](#)

Business

- [Spirits surpass wine in global volumes](#) – *The Spirits Business*
IWSR reported that global spirits volumes exceeded wine volumes for the first time since the organization began tracking the industry in 1990. While both categories

declined in 2025, wine volumes fell faster, allowing spirits to move ahead. The milestone reflects changing consumer preferences, the continued growth of premium spirits, and ongoing challenges facing the global wine industry.

- **'A major reset': beverage alcohol volumes fall again in 2025 – IWSR**

IWSR reported that global beverage alcohol volumes declined for a third consecutive year in 2025, describing current market conditions as a “major reset” for the industry. The research group expects overall alcohol consumption to continue declining through at least 2031 as consumers moderate consumption, prioritize health and wellness, and increasingly shift toward alternative beverage options. The report projects India will surpass the United States as the world’s second-largest alcohol market by 2032, while RTDs continue gaining share and spirits surpass wine globally for the first time since IWSR began tracking the industry.

- **Spirits & Beer Led YoY Declines at Start of Memorial Day Weekend, per NIQ Weekly Scans – Brewbound (\$)**

NIQ reported total beverage alcohol dollar sales declined 4.6% while volume fell 6.3% during the four weeks ending May 30. Spirits remained the weakest major category while prepared cocktails and RTDs continued to post growth. Analysts noted that poor weather and cautious consumer spending likely weighed on holiday performance, though several brands including Michelob Ultra, Pacifico, Guinness, Athletic Brewing, Cutwater, and Surfside outperformed the broader market.

- **April Beer Supply +0.9%, Tax Paid Flat After 2 Months of YoY Growth, per Beer Institute – Brewbound (\$)**

Beer Institute data showed imported beer volumes continued outperforming domestic shipments, led by Mexican imports which increased more than 8% year-over-year. Domestic tax-paid shipments declined modestly while total beer supply remained positive. Industry observers continue pointing to imports, premium offerings, and major events such as the World Cup and America250 celebrations as potential growth drivers.

E-Commerce & DTC

- **Scotch: \$20 Million Series A Raised To Modernize Liquor Retail Operations – Pulse 2.0**

Scotch announced a \$20 million Series A financing round to expand its AI-powered operating platform for beverage alcohol retailers. The company says its system helps retailers automate invoice matching, inventory management, cost updates, and analytics across thousands of SKUs and dozens of distributors. Investors continue

showing interest in technology platforms designed specifically for beverage alcohol retail operations.

- **[Walmart adds Subway to its delivery marketplace](#)** – *Restaurant Business*
Walmart announced the addition of Subway restaurants to its delivery marketplace, allowing customers to combine restaurant meals and grocery purchases in a single order. The move reflects continued efforts by major retailers to expand convenience-focused delivery ecosystems and compete for consumer spending across multiple categories. The partnership highlights the growing importance of delivery, digital ordering, and basket-building strategies throughout retail.
- **[McKinsey says AI could add €320 billion to European retail](#)** – *Vinetur*
New research suggests artificial intelligence could significantly reshape how consumers discover products and make purchasing decisions online. Analysts point to AI-powered recommendations, personalized shopping assistants, and agentic commerce tools as emerging forces that may influence retail assortment decisions and digital shelf placement. The trend is increasingly relevant for beverage alcohol retailers evaluating future e-commerce strategies.

ABL Member Benefit



ServSafe Alcohol

American Beverage Licensees (ABL) and the National Restaurant Association have partnered to provide ABL members and their state affiliate members discounted ServSafe Alcohol training and certification. Created by the National Restaurant Association, ServSafe Alcohol is a dynamic, skills-based training program designed to help prevent intoxication, drunk driving, and underage sales. The program offers convenient web-based server and seller training, providing industry-recognized instruction and certification for beverage alcohol employees. **Use code “ABLUSA” to save 20% on training. [Get started with ServSafe Alcohol »](#)**

States

- **[AR: Moon Distributors To Acquire RNDC’s Arkansas Operations](#)** – *Wine Industry Network*
Moon Distributors and RNDC announced an asset purchase agreement under which Moon will acquire RNDC’s Arkansas operations, subject to customary closing

conditions and regulatory approvals. The transaction represents another significant development in the ongoing restructuring of the alcohol distribution landscape.

- **CA: [San Francisco Blocks New Convenience Stores in the Tenderloin, SoMa for 18 Months](#) – KQED**

San Francisco approved new restrictions on convenience store and liquor license approvals in several neighborhoods, citing concerns about public safety, oversaturation, and community impacts. Opponents argue the policy could disproportionately affect small business owners and immigrant entrepreneurs.

- **MA: [City of Cambridge Approves Seasonal Sale of Alcohol-to-Go, Public Consumption Districts, and Extended Hours to Support Local Businesses](#) – City of Cambridge**

Massachusetts lawmakers approved legislation authorizing temporary alcohol-to-go privileges, expanded public consumption districts, and related measures tied to summer tourism and major international events. Supporters say the changes will help businesses capitalize on increased visitor activity.

- **OH: [Baldridge highlights economic impact of Ohio wineries](#) – Your Ohio News**
Ohio officials reported that the state's wine industry contributes approximately \$6.6 billion annually to the state economy and supports roughly 41,000 jobs. The announcement coincided with Ohio Wine Month celebrations and ongoing efforts to promote local wine production.

- **PA: [Brews to Barns Bill Advances Offers Support to Pa. Breweries](#) – Erie News Now**
Pennsylvania lawmakers advanced legislation providing tax incentives for breweries that donate spent grain to farmers and expanding flexibility under the state's Malt Beverage Tax Credit program. Supporters say the measure will help breweries reduce waste and strengthen ties with local agriculture.

International

- **[Alcohol spending in South Korea posts sharpest drop in seven years](#) – The Drinks Business**

South Korean alcohol spending declined 9% year-over-year, marking the sharpest drop in seven years and extending a broader trend of moderation among younger consumers. Analysts cite health concerns, changing social habits, and economic pressures as contributing factors.

- [**Ready-to-Drink Alcohol Sales Reach £704 Million in British Retail**](#) – *Vinetur*
Ready-to-drink sales in the United Kingdom reached record levels as consumers increasingly embrace convenience-oriented beverages. Nearly half of category growth reportedly came from consumers shifting spending away from traditional spirits.
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Back Bar

- [**Beer is No. 1 Pick for World Soccer Tournament Watch Parties, New Survey Finds**](#) – *Beer Institute*
Beer Institute survey data found that 67% of World Cup watch-party hosts plan to serve beer during matches, making it the most popular alcoholic beverage associated with tournament gatherings. The findings reinforce industry expectations that the World Cup could provide a meaningful sales boost.
 - [**Top tips to avoid trademark infringement at the 2026 World Cup**](#) – *Beverage Daily*
Companies preparing World Cup-themed marketing campaigns are being reminded to avoid unauthorized use of protected trademarks, logos, team names, and event branding. Legal experts caution that even well-intentioned promotional campaigns can create intellectual property risks.
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About ABL

American Beverage Licensees is the preeminent national trade association for beverage alcohol retailers. Direct retail beverage alcohol sales in the United States generate more than **2.03 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 **\$27.9 billion** in federal taxes and **\$20.0 billion** in state and local taxes. To learn more about ABL, visit www.ablusa.org.

American Beverage Licensees

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