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ABL WEEKLY

POLICY, INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS NEWS
FOR BEVERAGE RETAILERS

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Calendar

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| 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 10 | The Retailers Alliance Foundation of New York 57th Annual Golf Outing – East Norwich, NY |
| 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 Association 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 26	Metropolitan Package Store Association Annual Dinner – Howard Beach, NY
October 28	New Jersey Liquor Stores Association Trade Show – Edison, NJ
November 2	The Retailers Alliance Foundation of New York 56th Annual Dinner Dance – Chelsea Piers, NY
November 9-11	NBWA 13th Annual Next Generation Leadership Conference – San Diego, CA



Let's Get Federal

- [FTC Reaches Agreement In Principle With Southern Glazer's](#) – *Law360* (\$)
 A federal judge paused the FTC's price discrimination lawsuit against Southern Glazer's for 45 days after the parties said they had reached an agreement in principle. The lawsuit, filed at the end of the Biden administration, alleged that Southern Glazer's routinely charged small independent retailers more than large chains for the same products and was the FTC's first Robinson-Patman Act case in decades.
- [White House Letter To Congress Advocates For Hemp Regulatory Framework](#) – *Brewbound* (\$)
 The White House urged Congress to create a federal regulatory framework for hemp products or delay the November ban on many hemp-derived products. The letter gives additional momentum to retailers, wholesalers, restaurants and hemp beverage advocates seeking national standards rather than a broad federal prohibition.
- [Trade, Tariffs & Taste: American Whiskey Pushes For A Fair Pour In India](#) – *The Economic Times*

The American Whiskey Association says India could become a transformative export market for American whiskey if a U.S.-India trade framework improves tariff treatment and market access. The piece notes that India is the world's largest whiskey market by volume, but imported spirits continue to face substantial tariff and regulatory barriers.

Legal & Regulatory

- [Wine Taxes By State, 2026](#) – *Tax Foundation*

The Tax Foundation's annual survey found Kentucky continues to impose the nation's highest effective wine tax at \$3.82 per gallon, followed by Alaska, Florida and Iowa. California has the lowest wine tax at \$0.20 per gallon, and the report again argues that alcohol taxes should be based on alcohol content rather than beverage category.

- [Ohio's Hemp Law Runs Into The Dormant Commerce Clause](#) – *Libation Law Blog*

A federal court temporarily blocked enforcement of Ohio S.B. 56 against hemp companies, finding the plaintiffs were likely to succeed on a dormant Commerce Clause claim. The order said Ohio may regulate hemp and intoxicating cannabinoids, but cannot build a licensing structure that effectively requires federally lawful hemp products to be sourced, manufactured and distributed only within Ohio.

- [Ohio Wine Shipping Case: Circuit Split Or Sour Grapes?](#) – *Libation Law Blog*

Ohio is asking the U.S. Supreme Court to review a Sixth Circuit decision striking down the state's restrictions on out-of-state retailer wine shipping. The state argues the ruling creates a circuit split over how Tennessee Wine applies to retailer shipping laws and whether states must justify alcohol laws with evidence of public health or safety benefits.

- [17 States Sue Over California Regulation Of Plastic Packaging](#) – *Law360 (\$)*

Seventeen states and the National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors sued California over SB 54 regulations governing plastic packaging. The lawsuit challenges the state's extended producer responsibility rules, which could affect packaged goods companies, distributors and interstate supply chains.

- [CA Wine Industry Groups At Rare Standoff Over Future Of “American” Wine Labeling](#) – *The Sacramento Bee* (\$)

California wine industry groups are divided over legislation that would restrict use of the word “American” on wine labels unless the wine is made entirely from U.S.-grown grapes. Supporters say the bill would improve transparency for consumers and growers, while opponents warn it could disrupt existing national wine brands that use imported bulk wine.

Industry

- [RNDC Expects To Cease Operations In Illinois, Shutter Facilities](#) – *Brewbound* (\$)

Republic National Distributing Company said it expects to permanently close its Illinois facilities after financing was not available to continue operations in the state. The shutdown follows the sale or planned transfer of RNDC operations in numerous other markets and leaves suppliers in Illinois searching for new distribution arrangements.

- [How Wholesaler Consolidation Is Redefining Alcohol’s Three-Tier System In U.S.](#) – *Global Drinks Intel*

Global Drinks Intel examines how wholesaler consolidation is changing access to market for smaller suppliers and independent retailers. The story highlights rising minimum drops, fewer wholesaler options, reduced attention for smaller brands and the continuing fallout from RNDC’s retrenchment across key markets.

- [Four Profit Warnings, A \\$625M Mandate, And Now A Departing GB MD](#) – *Refine Drinks*

Diageo’s restructuring under CEO Dave Lewis has moved from planning to execution, with cost-cutting instructions issued to the executive committee and a leadership change in Great Britain. The report frames the August 6 Capital Markets Day as an explanation of decisions already underway rather than the start of a restructuring process.

- [Heineken Names Rafael Oliveira New CEO](#) – *Reuters*

Heineken named Rafael Oliveira, CEO of JDE Peet’s, as its next chair and CEO effective October 1. Oliveira will be the first outsider to lead the Dutch brewer and will take over as the company works to execute its EverGreen 2030 strategy amid weaker global beer demand and investor pressure for stronger performance.

- [M.S. Walker Brands Announces Strategic Alignment With Reyes Beverage Group](#) – *BevNET*
M.S. Walker Brands announced a strategic alignment with Reyes Beverage Group across several markets. The agreement adds another notable development to the ongoing reshaping of beverage alcohol distribution following RNDG's retreat from multiple states.
 - [A Global Wine Giant Is Downsizing Its California Assets](#) – *Yahoo Finance*
Treasury Wine Estates plans to reduce its California footprint by divesting or exiting leases in Napa Valley, Sonoma and the Central Coast while consolidating production at selected facilities. The company also plans to cut its labels from 76 to fewer than 30 over five years as it focuses on luxury wine and "modern refreshment."
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Cannabis & THC

- [Restaurant Owners Try To Keep Hemp On The Menu](#) – *Brewbound (\$)*
The National Restaurant Association urged Congress to delay the November ban on many hemp-derived THC products and develop a regulatory framework instead. The group said about 5% of restaurants that serve alcohol already offer hemp-derived THC beverages, while 26% of all restaurants are interested in offering them under clear rules.
 - [Virginia Alcohol Groups Oppose Using ABC Agents For Cannabis Enforcement](#) – *Virginia Scope*
Virginia alcohol industry groups warned that assigning alcohol enforcement personnel to cannabis oversight could strain ABC resources. Industry representatives said they support a regulated cannabis marketplace but do not want cannabis enforcement to come at the expense of alcohol regulation.
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Tariff Talk

- [French Wine Crisis "Only The Start"](#) – *Wine-Searcher*
French winemaker Gérard Bertrand warned that the French wine industry is at the beginning of a structural and cyclical crisis that could last three to five years. The

article also notes renewed U.S. tariff threats against French wine and Champagne tied to France's digital services tax.

- [**American Whiskey Takes Global Stage During America's 250th Anniversary Celebrations**](#) – *American Whiskey Association*

The American Whiskey Association is supporting U.S. Embassy and diplomatic events tied to America's 250th anniversary in markets including New Delhi, Paris, London, Brussels, Berlin and Singapore. AWA said the events are intended to showcase American whiskey's connection to agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality, trade and cultural diplomacy.

- [**Scotch Whisky Industry Targets U.S. Growth As Trade Pressures Continue**](#) – *Vinetur*

Scotland's whisky sector continues to focus on U.S. growth while monitoring tariff and trade developments that could affect exports. The push reflects the importance of the American market to global spirits producers and the sensitivity of beverage alcohol to broader trade disputes.

Associate Member Spotlight



American Distilled Spirits Alliance

The American Distilled Spirits Alliance is a coalition of American spirits producers focused on strengthening the distilled spirits marketplace through advocacy, education and industry engagement. ADSA works with policymakers and industry partners on issues affecting spirits producers, retailers, consumers and the broader beverage alcohol supply chain, bringing an important producer perspective to federal policy conversations affecting the three-tier system, market access, trade, taxation and responsible regulation.

[Visit ADSA »](#)

Business

- [**NIQ: Alcohol Shows Encouraging Weekly Uptick Heading Into Summer Months**](#) – *NIQ*

NIQ reported that total alcohol dollar sales reached \$8.7 billion during the four weeks ending June 13, down 4.1% from a year earlier, while case volume fell 5.3%. Weekly sales improved 1.6% from the prior week as summer occasions and the

FIFA World Cup began to support demand, with prepared cocktails remaining the clearest growth area.

- **[Alcohol Brands Need To Emphasize Value To Grow Sales](#)** – *Food Dive*
Deloitte research found consumers continue to value alcohol occasions but are increasingly focused on price and value. The report said value-seeking consumers, who make up nearly four in 10 shoppers, are cutting at-home alcohol spending and forcing brands to sharpen pricing, pack sizes and promotions.
- **[Summer Alcohol Trends: Gen Z Looks To Drink More, While Travelers Continue To Embrace Dry-Tripping](#)** – *CivicScience*
CivicScience found the share of adults who drink at least sometimes rose from 66% to 68%, ending a recent streak of declines. Gen Z drinkers were the most likely to say they plan to drink more this summer, while 62% of drinkers with vacation plans said they expect to take at least one alcohol-free trip in the next 90 days.
- **[Local Wine Investing Startup Vint Winding Down Operations](#)** – *Richmond BizSense*
Vint, a Richmond-based startup that allowed investors to buy shares of wine and spirits collections, told customers it is winding down operations and selling remaining assets. SEC filings showed recurring losses and an auditor warning of substantial doubt about the company's ability to continue as a going concern.
- **[Vroom And Swiftly Debut C-Store Alcohol Cash Back Program](#)** – *C-Store Dive*
Vroom Delivery and Swiftly launched a digital alcohol cash-back program for convenience retailers. The partnership allows manufacturers to fund alcohol rebates directly through retailers' online platforms, with consumers redeeming offers through PayPal or Venmo.

E-Commerce & DTC

- **[Napa And Total Winery Shipments Down In May](#)** – *Wine Business*
Wine Business reported that both Napa and total winery shipments declined in May, continuing pressure in the direct-to-consumer wine channel. The data adds to broader evidence that wine remains under strain from shifting consumer behavior, weaker visitation and category headwinds.

- [Winery Websites In Need Of A Refresh](#) – *Wine Business*

Wine Business argues many winery websites are failing to meet modern consumer expectations for ease of use, storytelling and conversion. The piece emphasizes that digital presentation increasingly affects tasting room visits, wine club signups and direct sales.

States

- [CA: “American Wine” Labeling Bill Pulled From 2026 Agenda](#) – *Wine Industry Advisor*

A California bill addressing use of the term “American” on wine labels was pulled from the state Senate agenda for 2026. The debate exposed divisions among grape growers, family wineries and larger producers over imported bulk wine, labeling transparency and domestic grape demand.

- [IL: Cocktails-To-Go Made Permanent](#) – *Capitol News Illinois*

Illinois made cocktails-to-go permanent, extending a pandemic-era policy that became a lasting part of the hospitality business model. The law gives restaurants and bars continued authority to sell sealed mixed drinks for takeout and delivery under state rules.

- [IN: Indiana State Fair Adds Alcohol Sales](#) – *WTHR*

Indiana will allow alcohol sales at the state fair, adding another example of expanded beverage alcohol availability at public events. The move follows a broader trend toward alcohol sales in venues and settings that previously limited or prohibited them.

- [KS: Kansas City Residents Could Get A Say In Neighborhood Liquor Licenses](#) – *KCTV*

Kansas City officials are considering ordinance changes that would require community input before certain liquor license upgrades and require notice when licensed businesses change ownership. City officials said the proposal is designed to provide more transparency and close gaps in the current licensing process.

- **[NJ: Lawmakers Advance Alcohol-Infused Ice Cream Bill](#)** – *WDHA-FM*
New Jersey lawmakers advanced legislation that would allow the manufacture and sale of alcohol-infused ice cream. The proposal reflects continued state-level experimentation with alcohol products that do not fit neatly into traditional beverage categories.
- **[NC: North Carolina Senate Advances Overhaul Of State Liquor Laws](#)** – *The News & Observer (\$)*
The North Carolina Senate advanced a broad ABC reform bill that would allow wine shops to hold malt beverage permits, malt beverage shops to hold wine permits and certain social district businesses to allow consumption of mixed drinks on premises. The bill also includes authority for a \$310 million loan to support a new state ABC warehouse.
- **[PA: Brews To Barns Act Passes House](#)** – *Pennsylvania House Democrats*
The Pennsylvania House approved legislation creating tax credits for breweries that donate spent grain to farmers and expanding transferability of the state's Malt Beverage Tax Credit. Supporters say the bill would help breweries reduce waste while supporting agriculture and farm operations.
- **[RI: Bars Must Offer Drink Lids Under New Anti-“Roofie” Law](#)** – *The Newport Buzz*
Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee signed legislation requiring bars and other on-premise alcohol establishments to offer drink lids to customers who request them beginning January 1. Establishments will not have to place lids on every drink, but must have removable lids available that fit at least one type of container.
- **[SC: DUI Compromise Preserves Reasonable Suspicion Standard](#)** – *WLTX*
South Carolina lawmakers reached a compromise on DUI legislation that strengthened impaired-driving enforcement while preserving the reasonable suspicion standard for blood draws. The measure followed negotiations over how to improve road safety while addressing civil liberties and enforcement concerns.



ServSafe Alcohol

ABL members have access to preferred pricing on ServSafe Alcohol training through the National Restaurant Association. ServSafe Alcohol provides responsible alcohol service training for bartenders, servers, managers and other staff who sell or serve beverage alcohol, helping employees recognize signs of intoxication, check identification, manage difficult situations and support safe, responsible service practices. [Learn more »](#)

International

- [**Finland Approves Alcohol Home Delivery And Sunday Alko Opening**](#) – *Helsinki Times*
Finland's parliament approved a major alcohol law overhaul allowing home delivery from Alko, grocery stores and licensed restaurants, along with Sunday and holiday openings for the state retailer. The law also clarifies cross-border online alcohol ordering rights from sellers elsewhere in the European Economic Area.
- [**Kirin President Says Beer Can Boost Spiritual Or Mental Health**](#) – *Financial Times (\$)*
Kirin president Takeshi Minakata said beer's role in social connection and mental wellbeing should be part of the public health debate over alcohol. His comments come as brewers push back against public health messaging that emphasizes cancer risk and "no safe level" guidance.
- [**France Restricts Public Alcohol Consumption As Heat Wave Hits Europe**](#) – *Associated Press*
French authorities restricted public alcohol consumption in red-alert heat zones during nationwide Music Day events as extreme temperatures strained emergency services. The measure was part of a broader response to a severe European heat wave that also disrupted sports, concerts, schools and transportation.
- [**United Kingdom Imposes World Cup Alcohol Ban On 7,300 Offenders Through Monitoring Tags**](#) – *UK Ministry of Justice*
The UK government said roughly 7,300 offenders will wear alcohol monitoring tags during the World Cup. The tags measure alcohol intake through sweat and are used for offenders subject to court-ordered alcohol bans or license conditions.

Back Bar

- [Scottish Soccer Fans Are Drinking Boston's Bars Out Of Beer](#) – *People*
Scottish fans in Boston for the World Cup reportedly drank some bars out of beer, including Boston Lager at one taproom. The story became a lighter illustration of the World Cup's ability to create high-volume on-premise occasions.
- [Another Spirit Of '76: George Washington's Whiskey](#) – *The New York Times* (\$)
A New York Times feature revisits George Washington's distillery and the role whiskey played in early American life. The story fits the broader America 250 conversation about beverage alcohol, agriculture, hospitality and the country's founding-era economy.
- [Why Is Everybody Making Blackberry Whiskey?](#) – *VinePair*
VinePair examines the recent wave of blackberry-flavored whiskey releases from major brands including Crown Royal, Jack Daniel's and Evan Williams. The article argues the flavor has become a gateway for newer whiskey drinkers because it is lower proof, mixable, affordable and built for casual occasions.
- [Can Breweries Turn Mid-Strength Beer Into A Category Of Its Own?](#) – *SevenFifty Daily*
Breweries are testing mid-strength beers between roughly 2.5% and 3.5% ABV as consumers seek moderation without fully switching to non-alcoholic products. The article notes that brands are positioning these beers around extended occasions, outdoor drinking and lower-calorie refreshment.

About ABL

American Beverage Licensees is the preeminent national trade association for independent beer, wine, and spirits retailers. ABL represents the interests of package stores, taverns, bars, restaurants, and other licensed beverage alcohol retailers before Congress, federal agencies, industry partners, and the public. ABL works to protect a responsible, competitive, and effective beverage alcohol marketplace rooted in the three-tier system, state-based regulation, and independent retail entrepreneurship. To learn more about ABL, visit www.ablusa.org.

American Beverage Licensees

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