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# ABL WEEKLY

POLICY, INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS NEWS  
FOR BEVERAGE RETAILERS

**Issue 555 | July 5, 2026**



## Calendar

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|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>July 15-16</b>      | Brewers Association Annual Hill Climb – Washington, DC                                   |
| <b>July 18-20</b>      | Texas Package Stores Association Annual Convention & Trade Show – San Antonio, TX        |
| <b>July 19-24</b>      | Tales of the Cocktail – New Orleans, LA                                                  |
| <b>July 21-22</b>      | American Craft Spirits Association Legislative Fly-In – Washington, DC                   |
| <b>August 10</b>       | The Retailers Alliance Foundation of New York 57th Annual Golf Outing – East Norwich, NY |
| <b>August 18-19</b>    | American Distilling Institute Conference – Miami Beach, FL                               |
| <b>August 24-26</b>    | Center for Alcohol Policy Alcohol Law & Policy Conference – Minneapolis, MN              |
| <b>September 17-18</b> | WSWA Women’s Leadership Conference – Washington, DC                                      |
| <b>September 20-22</b> | Illinois Licensed Beverage Association Convention & Trade Show – Springfield, IL         |
| <b>September 21-23</b> | Montana Tavern Association Annual Trade Show & Convention – Anaconda, MT                 |
| <b>September 28-29</b> | WSWA Annual Membership Forum – Chicago, IL                                               |
| <b>October 4-8</b>     | Tavern League of Wisconsin Fall Convention & Trade Show – Wisconsin Dells, WI            |
| <b>October 4-8</b>     | Wine & Spirits Guild of America Meeting – Willamette Valley, OR                          |
| <b>October 8</b>       | 43rd Annual Market Watch Leaders Awards Banquet – New York, NY                           |
| <b>October 11-14</b>   | NBWA 89th Annual Convention & Product Showcase – Orlando, FL                             |

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|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>October 13</b>    | New York State Liquor Store Association Holiday Trade Show – Albany, NY                    |
| <b>October 13-14</b> | BREW & Alliance for Women in Beer: Making Moves – Orlando, FL                              |
| <b>October 15</b>    | New York State Liquor Store Association Holiday Trade Show – Buffalo, NY                   |
| <b>October 19-20</b> | Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S. Legislative & Board Meeting – Washington, DC         |
| <b>October 19-20</b> | Tennessee Wine & Spirits Retailers Association Annual Conference – Nashville, TN           |
| <b>October 26</b>    | Metropolitan Package Store Association Annual Dinner – Howard Beach, NY                    |
| <b>October 28</b>    | New Jersey Liquor Stores Association Trade Show – Edison, NJ                               |
| <b>November 2</b>    | The Retailers Alliance Foundation of New York 56th Annual Dinner Dance – Chelsea Piers, NY |
| <b>November 9-11</b> | NBWA 13th Annual Next Generation Leadership Conference – San Diego, CA                     |



### Let's Get Federal

- [The Supreme Court Ruled Seven Years Ago. Taxpayers Are Still Paying The Price](#) – *Washington Examiner*

ABL Executive Director John Bodnovich argues that seven years after Tennessee Wine, taxpayers should not continue paying to defend repetitive constitutional challenges to state retail alcohol shipping laws. The op-ed notes that courts across the country have repeatedly upheld state authority to regulate alcohol under the 21st Amendment and says public resources would be better spent addressing illegal alcohol shipments than relitigating questions courts have already answered.

- [SPIRIT Act Introduced To Support Small Distillers Across The Country](#) – *Wine Industry Network*

Reps. Jeff Hurd (R-CO) and Jill Tokuda (D-HI) introduced the SPIRIT Act, legislation that would create a federal excise tax credit for qualifying small distillers that source at least 90 percent of their agricultural inputs domestically. Eligible distillers producing up to 100,000 proof gallons annually could receive a \$2.35 per proof gallon tax reduction, giving craft producers additional support at a time of higher input costs and softer category conditions.

- [\*\*EU Moves To Implement U.S. Trade Deal While Preserving Retaliation Options\*\*](#) – *European Commission*

The European Union is moving to implement tariff preferences and quotas connected to its 2025 trade understanding with the United States while reserving authority to suspend benefits if Washington changes course. The measure reflects continued uncertainty around steel, aluminum and other tariffs that have affected transatlantic beverage alcohol supply chains, importers and downstream businesses.

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## Legal & Regulatory

- [\*\*Ordering Alcohol With Fake IDs: AI Creates Forgeries In Just 10 Minutes\*\*](#) – *SBS World News*

A South Korean news report found that AI tools can generate convincing forged mobile IDs in minutes, after teenagers allegedly attempted to order alcohol using fake digital identification. The report warns that visual inspection alone may no longer be enough and says QR-code or app-based verification is a safer approach.

- [\*\*5th Circuit Backs FDA's Block On Vape Marketing\*\*](#) – *Law360 (\$)*

The Fifth Circuit upheld FDA's denial of marketing authorization for menthol-flavored e-cigarette products, finding the agency adequately weighed the claimed benefits for adult smokers against youth-access risks. While focused on tobacco products, the ruling is notable because it reinforces how courts may defer to agency judgments on age-restricted products when youth access and public health are central concerns.

- [\*\*Germany Plans To Raise Spirits Taxes By 20% Next Year\*\*](#) – *Vinetur*

Germany's finance ministry is reportedly preparing a 20 percent tax increase on spirits, sparkling wine, Champagne, fortified wines and alcopops, while leaving beer unchanged and still wine tax-free. If enacted, the proposal could raise shelf prices for spirits and sparkling wines and create category-level competitive effects for retailers, bars and restaurants.

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## Industry

- [Control States Report Softer Spirits And Wine Performance In May](#) – NABCA  
Control states reported softer spirits and wine trends in May, with spirits 9L volume down 1.7 percent and dollar volume down 4.4 percent. Wine also remained under pressure, with 9L volume down 8.8 percent and dollar volume down 8.5 percent. NABCA noted that fewer selling days across several markets affected results, while cocktails, led by canned RTDs, were the only spirits segment showing meaningful growth.
- [World Cup Host Markets Score Big On-Premise](#) – *Brewbound (\$)*  
BeerBoard and Beer Institute data show the World Cup is generating a measurable on-premise lift, particularly in host markets. Beer sales in bars and restaurants increased 5.5 percent nationwide, while host markets saw on-premise sales rise 15.4 percent over the first two weeks, driven by bars and taverns up 18.4 percent and restaurants up 12.9 percent.
- [Sazerac Buys Garrard County Distilling For \\$20M](#) – *The Spirits Business*  
Tom Collins Distilling, affiliated with Sazerac, purchased the former Garrard County Distilling property in Lancaster, Kentucky, for \$20 million in a court-ordered auction. The distillery began production in 2024 as one of the largest independently owned bourbon distilleries in Kentucky before halting production and entering receivership in 2025.
- [Keg 1 Missouri To Acquire 1M+ Cases From Fechtel Beverage & Sales](#) – *Brewbound (\$)*  
Keg 1 Missouri announced a deal to acquire more than 1 million cases from Fechtel Beverage & Sales in central Missouri. The deal, expected to close in mid-September pending approvals, is Keg 1's third acquisition or major transaction this year and reflects continued consolidation within beer distribution.
- [Edrington Exits American Whiskey With Wyoming Sale](#) – *The Spirits Business*  
Edrington sold its 80 percent stake in Wyoming Whiskey to WW Partners, a local company led by co-founder David DeFazio. The transaction returns the distillery to Wyoming-based ownership and includes the return of Nancy Fraley as master blender.

- [Hemp Beverages Remain In Federal Spotlight](#) – *Yahoo News*  
The continued growth of hemp-derived THC beverages is putting pressure on Congress, state lawmakers and regulators to decide whether these products should be treated more like alcohol, cannabis, food products or a separate category.
  - [Beverly Police To Launch Alcohol, Pot Compliance Checks At Bars, Restaurants](#) – *Patch | Beverly, MA*  
Beverly, Massachusetts police said alcohol compliance checks will begin in July and continue through 2026, using an underage operative without valid ID. Police also said THC and marijuana compliance checks will begin immediately, including inspections of retailers licensed to sell tobacco to ensure THC products are not being sold without proper authorization.
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#### **Business & Market Watch**

- [NIQ: Alcohol Shows A Modest Weekly Lift As Summer Demand Builds](#) – *NIQ*  
NIQ reported that total alcohol dollar sales reached \$8.8 billion during the four weeks ending June 20, down 3.6 percent from a year earlier, while case volume fell 5.1 percent. Weekly dollar sales increased 2.9 percent from the prior period, reflecting summer demand, World Cup viewing occasions and the Juneteenth holiday weekend.
- [Craft Negative Trends Stabilize In June](#) – *Brewbound (\$)*  
Circana data show craft beer dollar sales declined 4.6 percent and volume fell 6.2 percent in the latest four-week period, but trends stabilized compared with the prior report.
- [WSWA SipSource Forecast Signals Continued Headwinds, Modest Improvement Ahead](#) – *WSWA*  
WSWA's latest SipSource forecast points to continued industry headwinds with some signs of modest improvement. The forecast adds to a growing body of data showing that beverage alcohol demand remains uneven by category, channel and consumer segment.
- [Brown-Forman Shares Sink After Revenue Slide](#) – *Reuters*  
Brown-Forman reported continued pressure across parts of its portfolio, with

investors focused on weaker consumer demand, category softness and the company's ability to navigate a more difficult spirits market. The update adds to broader evidence that premium spirits companies are adjusting to a more cautious consumer environment.

- [Consumer Confidence Ticks Up In June; Labor Market Concerns Rise](#) – *Chain Store Age*

Consumer confidence improved in June, but high prices and labor-market concerns remain pressure points for households. For beverage alcohol retailers and on-premise operators, the data suggest consumers may still participate in social occasions while remaining selective about price, value and frequency.

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### Associate Member Spotlight



**AMERICAN  
DISTILLED  
SPIRITS  
ALLIANCE**

#### **American Distilled Spirits Alliance (ADSA)**

The American Distilled Spirits Alliance (ADSA) is a national trade association representing leading companies that manufacture, import, and market distilled spirits, accounting for more than 60% of all distilled spirits sales in the United States. ADSA advocates for predictable policies on taxation, trade, and regulation that promote consumer choice and support a stable, transparent marketplace. [Visit ADSA »](#)

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### States

- [CA: Napa Vineyards Push Back Against New Groundwater Fees](#) – *New York Post*

Napa Valley growers are objecting to new groundwater fees of nearly \$99 per irrigated acre, arguing the costs arrive as wine demand softens, grape contracts become harder to secure and regulatory compliance costs continue to rise. County officials say the fees are necessary to maintain local groundwater management and avoid state intervention.

- [ID: Idaho State Liquor Stores To Remain Open On Fourth Of July](#) – *Idaho State Journal*

Idaho State Liquor Division stores were scheduled to remain open on July 4, while closing July 5 in observance of America's 250th birthday. Contract store hours may vary.

- [NC: North Carolina Ranks Among Highest Taxes On Distilled Spirits And Beer – WBT](#)  
North Carolina ranks fifth-highest nationally for state distilled spirits taxes and sixth-highest for beer taxes, according to reporting based on Tax Foundation data. The report highlights how excise tax structures can affect beverage categories differently, particularly as RTDs and other hybrid products blur traditional lines.
- [NY: New York Launches \\$30M Program To Compensate Farmers For Tariff Costs – Quartz](#)  
New York launched a \$30 million Agricultural Resiliency Against Tariffs Program offering direct payments of up to \$25,000 to certain dairy, livestock, specialty crop and aquaculture producers. The state said wine exports to Canada fell 77 percent last year, illustrating how trade disputes can affect domestic agricultural and beverage alcohol producers.
- [WA: Walla Walla Wine Facility Shutting Down – Tri-Cities Area Journal of Business](#)  
Ste. Michelle Wine Estates will close its Northstar winemaking facility and tasting room in Walla Walla and shift the label's production to Columbia Crest. The company said Northstar remains an important part of its portfolio but is consolidating southeast Washington operations as part of a broader sustainability and restructuring effort.

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## **ABL Member Benefit**



### **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 »](#)

- [Canada: Alcohol Consumption Hits 20-Year Low As Non-Alc Options Soar](#) – *CBC News*  
Canadian per-capita alcohol consumption has fallen for four consecutive years to a 20-year low, while non-alcoholic options continue to grow. New Brunswick Liquor Corporation reported its non-alcoholic beverage sales rose 82 percent in the 2025-2026 fiscal year, reflecting broader moderation trends across consumer occasions.
  - [United Kingdom: Wine Society CEO Joins WSTA Board](#) – *Harpers*  
Steve Finlan, CEO of The Wine Society, joined the Wine and Spirit Trade Association board. WSTA said his retail and membership-organization experience will be valuable as the U.K. alcohol trade navigates excise duty, packaging taxes and higher business costs.
  - [Europe: ‘Drunk Riding’ Behind Almost Half Of Fatal E-Scooter Crashes In Sweden](#) – *EurekAlert*  
A Swedish study found that 44 percent of fatal electric scooter crashes involved riders under the influence of alcohol, compared with 27 percent for e-bike riders and 13 percent for cyclists. None of the fatally injured e-scooter riders were wearing helmets.
  - [Scotland: Government Backs ‘It’ll Cost You’ Campaign](#) – *Scottish Grocer & Convenience Retailer*  
The Scottish Government backed the return of the ‘It’ll Cost You!’ campaign targeting proxy purchasing of alcohol for minors. The campaign is a partnership among Police Scotland, retailers, the Scottish Alcohol Industry Partnership and Community Alcohol Partnerships.
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## **Back Bar**

- [New Survey: Beer Tops List Of Drinks Adults Consider Most American](#) – *Beer Institute*  
A Beer Institute survey conducted by Morning Consult found that 55 percent of adults 21 and older say beer is the drink that feels most American, ahead of soda, iced tea, lemonade, liquor and wine. The survey also found that 95 percent of Americans hosting or attending a July 4 party planned to include beer at the event.

- [14 Essential Wineries In American Wine History](#) – *VinePair*  
VinePair uses America's 250th anniversary year to revisit pivotal moments in American wine history, from Kentucky's First Vineyard and Cincinnati's sparkling Catawba to Napa tourism, Willamette Valley Pinot Noir and the Judgment of Paris.
  - [Have We Forgotten Wine's Place At The Table?](#) – *The New York Times* (\$)   
Eric Asimov argues that wine's historic role as part of the meal is fading in restaurants as cocktail culture grows, sommeliers become less common and restaurant wine prices rise.
  - [Why Does Alcohol Hit Harder In Hot Weather?](#) – *PA Media*  
Medical experts explain that heat can intensify alcohol's effects by increasing dehydration, widening blood vessels and impairing judgment.
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#### **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](http://www.ablusa.org).

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