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ABL WEEKLY

POLICY, INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS NEWS
FOR BEVERAGE RETAILERS

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Let's Get Federal

- [ABL Applauds House Passage Of Bipartisan Common Cents Act](#) – *American Beverage Licensees*
The U.S. House approved the bipartisan Common Cents Act (H.R. 3074), legislation supported by ABL and a broad coalition of Main Street business organizations that would establish a uniform national framework for rounding cash transactions after the penny is phased out. ABL said the bill will give retailers and consumers greater certainty, reduce operational complexity and support a smooth transition for millions of cash purchases processed by local bars, taverns and package stores. The measure now moves to the Senate.
- [Beer Distributors Help Deliver A World Cup To Remember](#) – *National Beer Wholesalers Association*
NBWA highlighted how independent beer distributors expanded delivery routes, staffed stadiums and supported local watch parties throughout the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Members reported major on-premise gains in host cities, including sharply higher draft sales and extraordinary demand for imported brands. The results underscore the essential role local distributors play in helping bars, restaurants and retailers respond quickly to major consumer occasions.
- [American Whiskey Groups Back Investigation Of Canadian Alcohol Restrictions](#) – *Yahoo Finance*
American whiskey and wine organizations are supporting congressional efforts to direct USTR to investigate Canadian provincial restrictions on U.S. alcohol products. Industry groups argue that the continued removal of American wine, beer and spirits from provincial shelves has damaged producers, farmers, logistics providers and hospitality businesses throughout the U.S. supply chain.



Legal & Regulatory

- [Oregon EPR Lawsuit Challenges Disproportionate Costs On Glass Bottles](#) –

Wine Institute

Wine Institute and DISCUS filed an amicus brief challenging Oregon's extended producer responsibility program, arguing that weight-based fees unfairly penalize wine and spirits packaged in glass. The groups say a standard 750-milliliter glass bottle can face fees more than eight times higher than comparable plastic packaging, raising costs for producers and potentially consumers while creating Commerce Clause concerns.

- [New York Distillery Seeks To Block LIV Golf Alcohol Trademark Use](#) – *Law360 (\$)*

Long Island Vodka is asking a federal court to prevent LIV Golf from using the LIV mark in connection with alcohol promotion. The distillery argues that the larger golf brand could overwhelm its longstanding trademark and create reverse confusion among consumers, distributors and other industry participants.

- [Whisky Cask Investment Firm Cited Again For Misleading Claims](#) – *The Spirits Business*

The U.K. Advertising Standards Authority upheld complaints against a whisky-cask investment company over inaccurate review scores, unsupported return claims and insufficient disclosure that the investments were unregulated and could lose value. The ruling adds to wider scrutiny of cask-investment promotions and fraud risks.



Industry

- [RNDC Wind-Down Leaves Suppliers Chasing Payments And New Routes To Market](#) – *Brewbound (\$)*

The contraction of Republic National Distributing Company is continuing to disrupt the three-tier system, with suppliers reporting delayed payments, distributor transitions and pressure on cash flow. Smaller brands are particularly exposed because they must continue funding production and operations while waiting months for receivables and searching for replacement distribution.

- [Brown-Forman CEO Lawson Whiting To Retire](#) – *Brown-Forman*

Brown-Forman announced that President and CEO Lawson Whiting will retire after a successor is appointed. The board has begun a search considering internal and

external candidates, while the company reiterated its fiscal 2027 outlook. The transition comes as the spirits maker navigates softer demand, portfolio changes and broader industry pressure.

- [Quality Brands Completes RNDC Plains States Transaction](#) – *Wine Industry Advisor*
Quality Brands completed its acquisition of RNDC operations in Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota, retaining roughly 160 employees and the full sales organization. The transaction expands Quality Brands into a larger total-beverage distributor and provides continuity for suppliers and retail customers across the Plains States.
 - [Uncle Nearest Faces Federal Fraud Investigations](#) – *The New York Times* (\$)
The court-appointed receiver overseeing Uncle Nearest reported that the SEC and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York are investigating potential financial misconduct. The receiver also terminated the company's founders from their remaining positions and continues to pursue a sale while litigation and creditor claims expand.
 - [Kroger Expands Premium Wine Shop Concept](#) – *Kroger*
Kroger is testing a more curated wine-shop format in select stores, featuring more than 130 wines, expanded imported and premium selections, improved navigation and pairing guidance. Most products remain in the \$15–\$40 range, but locations may also carry higher-priced and allocated wines, increasing grocery competition for independent beverage retailers.
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Cannabis & THC

- [California's Illegal Marijuana Market Continues To Thrive](#) – *The Wall Street Journal* (\$)
California officials reported seizing more than 63,000 pounds of illegal marijuana valued at \$104 million over three months, highlighting the persistence of the illicit market despite legalization. Licensed cannabis businesses continue to argue that untaxed and unregulated operators undercut compliant sellers and weaken the promised benefits of a regulated marketplace.
- [Tilray Lowers Beverage Expectations As Craft Brands Struggle](#) – *TD Cowen*
An analyst update lowered expectations for Tilray's beverage segment after scanner data indicated continued weakness across its craft beer brands. The

report suggests that acquisitions may add revenue, but underlying portfolio performance remains challenged as the company balances cannabis, beverage and international operations.

Business & Market Watch

- [NIQ: July Fourth Purchasing Boosts Weekly Alcohol Sales – NIQ](#)
Total alcohol dollar sales reached \$9.3 billion during the four weeks ending July 4, down 3.0 percent from a year earlier, while weekly sales jumped nearly 20 percent from the prior week. Prepared cocktails remained the strongest segment, beer and spirits improved with holiday and World Cup occasions, and wine continued to post the steepest declines.
 - [July Fourth Bev-Alc Sales Finish Nearly Flat – Brewbound \(\\$\)](#)
Circana reported that total beverage alcohol dollar sales were essentially flat during the July Fourth week, an improvement from the prior year's holiday decline. Spirits posted growth, beer improved modestly and wine remained negative, while prepared cocktails and several import and domestic beer brands delivered the strongest gains.
 - [Gen Z Drinking Participation Now Near Adult Average – IWSR](#)
IWSR's latest Bevtrac survey found that 74 percent of legal-drinking-age Gen Z consumers drink alcohol, close to the 76 percent adult average and up from 66 percent three years ago. Gen Z remains especially engaged with cocktails and group social occasions, while Boomers now report the lowest participation and frequency. Overall moderation is showing up more through fewer occasions and fewer drinks per occasion than through abstinence.
 - [Inflation Continues To Outpace Beverage Alcohol Prices – Brewbound \(\\$\)](#)
June beverage alcohol prices rose more slowly than overall inflation, although beer prices increased 3.1 percent both at home and away from home. Spirits and wine pricing remained softer in retail channels, while on-premise prices continued to rise more quickly as operators manage labor, rent and other cost pressures.
 - [U.S. Alcohol Wholesalers Report \\$15.381 Billion In May Sales – Vinetur](#)
U.S. merchant wholesalers of beer, wine and distilled spirits reported \$15.381 billion in May sales, down from April but above levels recorded earlier in the year.
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Associate Member Spotlight



McCormick Distilling Company

Founded in 1856 in Weston, Missouri, McCormick Distilling Company operates at the oldest continuously operating distillery site west of the Mississippi River. Its portfolio includes McCormick Vodka and Gin, 360 Vodka, Tequila Rose, Broker's Gin, Five Farms Irish Cream, Platte Valley Corn Whiskey and other established spirits brands. The company combines historic American distilling roots with a broad portfolio serving retailers and consumers across multiple price points and categories. [Visit McCormick Distilling »](#)

States

- [CA: Napa Growers Confront Losses And Pressure To Remove Vineyards](#) – *Wine-Searcher*
Industry analysis argues that many small Napa vineyards are no longer economically viable as grape prices fall below increasingly high farming and compliance costs. The contraction is forcing growers to mothball or remove acreage and may accelerate consolidation among wineries and vineyard owners.
- [NY: Coalition Launches “Cheers For Change” Liquor Law Campaign](#) – *New York Post*
A coalition of business, hospitality and retail groups is calling for changes to New York’s 200-foot and 500-foot rules, tied-house restrictions and retail licensing limits. The proposal includes allowing additional retail outlets and multiple liquor-store ownership, changes that would have significant competitive implications for existing independent package stores.
- [OR: Health Agency Criticized For Comparing Alcohol With Asbestos And Tobacco](#) – *The Oregonian*
Beverage industry groups and a bipartisan group of Oregon lawmakers criticized a state health campaign that placed alcohol in the same carcinogen category as asbestos and tobacco without explaining the difference between hazard

classification and actual risk. Lawmakers asked the agency to revise the message and apply a higher standard of context and accuracy.

- [WI: Madison Warns Liquor License Holders About Phishing Scam](#) – *City of Madison*
Madison officials warned liquor license holders about fraudulent emails using publicly available licensing information to demand payment by wire transfer, peer-to-peer app or cryptocurrency. Retailers should independently verify any invoice or payment request with the local licensing authority before sending funds.

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 »](#)

International

- [China: Alcohol Group Seeks Stricter Oversight Of Online Sales](#) – *Bloomberg (\$)*
China's alcohol trade association called for stronger regulation of online liquor platforms, citing high commissions, price distortion and pressure on distributors and smaller producers. The group also urged greater antitrust scrutiny and investment in traceability, digital supply-chain systems and tools that help smaller producers reach consumers.
- [Europe: Beer Consumption Falls Below Pandemic Levels](#) – *Drinks Intel*
European beer consumption declined again in 2025 and fell below 2020 pandemic levels, while production was down more than 10 percent from 2019. Non-alcoholic beer remained a bright spot, growing nearly 6 percent for the year and reaching roughly one in every 12 beers consumed in the European Union.

- [China: Tariffs Push Franzia To Replace American Wine With Australian Supply](#)– *Vino Joy News*

Facing an effective tax burden approaching 80 percent on U.S. wine, Franzia has shifted its China strategy to Australian bulk wine packaged locally. The move preserves the brand's affordable positioning but illustrates how tariffs can rewrite product origin, supply chains and market access for established American brands.

Back Bar

- [Half Of Napa Vineyards Lost Money Last Year. How Are Others Surviving?](#) – *VinePair*

Napa wineries that remain profitable are leaning on flexible tasting experiences, stronger club relationships, direct outreach to members and rigorous cost control.

- [2026 Beer Industry Report Card: Living On A Prayer](#) – *VinePair*

A wide-ranging midyear assessment gives the beer business mixed grades as sales remain soft, innovation struggles and major sporting events provide only temporary lifts.

Calendar

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

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.

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