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ABL WEEKLY

POLICY, INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS NEWS
FOR BEVERAGE RETAILERS

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Let's Get Federal

- [Trump to impose 50% tariffs on Canadian hockey sticks, milk, alcohol and other goods](#) – CBS News

President Trump announced 50 percent tariffs on a range of Canadian goods, including beer, wine and distilled spirits, effective August 19. The administration invoked Section 338 of the Tariff Act of 1930 in response to Canadian provincial restrictions on U.S. alcohol products, while beverage alcohol groups warned that further escalation could increase costs, deepen trade uncertainty and invite additional retaliation affecting retailers and hospitality businesses.

- [Rep. Steube Delivers for Small Distillers with Direct-to-Consumer Shipping Act](#) – Press Release

U.S. Representative Greg Steube introduced the Craft Distilled Spirits Direct-to-Consumer Shipping Act of 2026, legislation that would create a federal pathway for qualifying independently owned distilleries to ship products directly to consumers across state lines. The proposal applies to distilleries producing no more than 250,000 gallons annually and requires both the shipping and receiving states to permit direct shipment.

- [Barr Introduces Lawful Hemp Protection Act to Protect Kentucky Farmers, Consumers, and the Future of the Hemp Industry](#) – Press Release

U.S. Congressman Andy Barr introduced bipartisan legislation to establish a federal regulatory framework for hemp-derived consumer products. The bill would create standards for cultivation, manufacturing, testing and labeling, prohibit synthetic cannabinoids in finished products, restrict retail sales to consumers age 21 and older, and prohibit marketing or advertising directed toward children.

- ['Let's brew it in the United States': Teamsters target Modelo and Corona in push for Mexican beer tariffs](#) – *Fox News*

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters is urging the administration to impose steep tariffs on Mexican beer, arguing that more production of brands including Modelo and Corona should move to U.S. breweries. The proposal could have significant consequences for import pricing, retailer margins and consumer demand in a beer market where Mexican imports have become a major source of growth.

Legal & Regulatory

- [Supreme Court to decide if Alaska can seize pilot's plane over 6-pack of beer](#) – *The Hill*

The Supreme Court agreed to hear a pilot's Eighth Amendment challenge to Alaska's effort to seize his aircraft after a passenger attempted to bring a six-pack of beer into a dry village. The case will test whether forfeiting an approximately \$95,000 airplane for a misdemeanor alcohol offense constitutes an excessive fine.

- [From Weed to Whiskey: Is This the Supreme Court's Next Big Commerce Clause Case?](#) – *Reason*

A pending challenge to the federal prohibition on home distilling asks whether Congress can rely on the Commerce Clause to ban alcohol production intended solely for personal use. The case could become an important test of federal regulatory power and the constitutional boundaries between national authority, individual activity and alcohol regulation.

Industry

- [Jack Daniel's Alabama whiskey barrel-making plant is closing](#) – *AL.com*
Independent Stave Company will close its Alabama Cooperage facility in Trinity by September 14, eliminating more than 70 jobs. The company attributed the closure to current market demand, offering another sign that softer whiskey production and inventory pressures are reaching suppliers throughout the distilled spirits supply chain.
- [Little bottles are becoming a big business for booze](#) – *CNN*
Major spirits suppliers are expanding miniature and smaller-format bottles as consumers seek more affordable ways to purchase premium brands. The trend reflects growing price sensitivity, but also creates opportunities for trial,

convenience and premiumization at lower absolute price points for package retailers.

- [Johnson Brothers Announces New Partnership with Edrington](#) – *Johnson Brothers*
Johnson Brothers announced a new distribution partnership with Edrington, expanding its representation of the supplier's premium spirits portfolio. The agreement adds to the continuing realignment of supplier-distributor relationships and reflects the strategic importance of scale, execution and market coverage during a period of significant middle-tier change.
 - [CFO Hélène de Tissot to leave Pernod for Chanel](#) – *The Spirits Business*
Pernod Ricard chief financial officer Hélène de Tissot will leave the company to join Chanel. The executive transition comes as Pernod Ricard manages weaker U.S. demand, cost pressures and a broader strategic reset across its global spirits business.
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Cannabis & THC

- [Major Alcohol Industry Lobby Backs Bill To Keep Hemp THC Drinks Legal, But It Wants More 'Discussion' On Tax Rate](#) – *Marijuana Moment*
WSWA endorsed the Barr-Craig hemp framework as an important step toward a regulated marketplace for intoxicating hemp products, while calling for further discussion of the proposed federal tax rate. The group emphasized the need for enforceable trade practices, product standards and a system that treats intoxicating THC beverages more like other regulated adult products.
 - [Has Legal Marijuana Passed Its High Point?](#) – *The Wall Street Journal (\$)*
A Wall Street Journal commentary argues that political and cultural support for marijuana legalization may be receding as concerns grow about addiction, high-potency products, impaired driving and the persistence of illicit markets. The piece points to recent ballot defeats and renewed calls for tighter regulation as evidence that the policy debate is entering a more skeptical phase.
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Business & Market Watch

- [Restaurant operating expenses have jumped by 36% in 6 years](#) – *Restaurant Business*
National Restaurant Association data show total restaurant operating expenses

have risen 36 percent since before the pandemic, matching the increase in average menu prices over the same period. Food, labor, utilities, occupancy and credit-card processing costs have all increased, leaving many independent operators with little ability to rebuild already-thin margins.

- [Well, well, well, it turns out Gen Z isn't so special after all.](#) – *Business Insider*
New IWSR data show that 74 percent of legal-drinking-age Gen Z consumers have consumed alcohol during the past six months, close to the overall adult average. Gen Z entered the category later but is especially engaged with cocktails, premium products and social drinking occasions, challenging the conventional narrative that the generation is broadly rejecting alcohol.
- [Alcohol sales revert after short-lived relief from Independence Day spike](#)– *Wine Business*
The latest NielsenIQ results show that the Independence Day boost did not produce a lasting change in category trends. Spirits improved relative to beer and wine, prepared cocktails continued to outperform, and the market remained divided between a small number of growing segments and persistent volume declines across traditional categories.
- [Albertsons Cuts Sales View as Grocery Shoppers Grow Cautious](#) – *The Wall Street Journal* (\$)
Albertsons lowered its sales outlook as shoppers became more cautious and value-focused. The results add to evidence that grocery and mass retail consumers are closely managing discretionary purchases, a trend that can affect beverage alcohol basket size, promotional sensitivity and competition across retail channels.



National Alcohol Beverage Control Association

Founded in 1938, NABCA represents the jurisdictions that directly control the distribution or sale of beverage alcohol within their borders. The association provides research, data, educational programs and a forum for control systems, regulators, public-health organizations and industry partners to exchange information and support responsible, efficient alcohol regulation. [Visit NABCA »](#)

States

- [**AL: ABC Board delays vote on liquor warehouse storage fee increase – 1819**](#)
News
The Alabama ABC Board postponed consideration of another increase in the bailment fee paid by liquor suppliers for products stored in the state warehouse. The discussion also renewed legislative criticism of Alabama’s control-state retail and wholesale structure and calls for greater private-sector participation.
- [**MN: Grandmother, 82, wins law change so she can enjoy Happy Hour at care home – BBC**](#)
Minnesota enacted a law allowing nursing homes and assisted-living facilities to serve alcohol to residents and guests at special events without obtaining a liquor license, provided the state receives advance notice. The measure was championed by an 82-year-old resident who argued that senior living communities should be able to preserve ordinary social traditions.
- [**MO: New Missouri law requires drunk drivers to pay child support if they kill a parent – St. Joseph Post**](#)
Missouri enacted a version of “Bentley’s Law” requiring people convicted of causing a parent’s death through impaired driving to make child-support payments to surviving children. The broader legislation also strengthens felony penalties and expands ignition-interlock requirements for alcohol-related offenses.
- [**VA: Spanberger declined to reappoint Virginia ABC head – Virginia Business**](#)
Gov. Abigail Spanberger declined to reappoint Virginia ABC CEO Dale Farino and

named longtime agency executive Thomas Kirby acting CEO. The leadership change comes as the authority faces slowing sales, rising operating costs and continued scrutiny of its performance as an independent control-state entity.

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

- [Australia: Store-bought vodka from licensed IGA retailer found to contain key ingredient in paint stripper](#) – *ABC News Australia*

Laboratory testing found that vodka purchased from a licensed Australian retailer contained a dangerous industrial solvent associated with paint-stripping products. The case highlights the public-safety threat posed by illicit or adulterated alcohol entering otherwise legitimate retail channels and the importance of traceability and enforcement.

- [UK government launches Scotch whisky inquiry](#) – *The Spirits Business*

The Scottish Affairs Committee opened an inquiry into the health of the Scotch whisky industry, including the effects of tariffs, trade agreements, excise taxes, energy costs, workforce issues and the planned deposit-return system. The review comes as exports and producer finances remain under pressure despite recent tariff relief in several major markets.

- [Germany: German railway to ban consuming alcohol at all its stations, with some exemptions](#) – *Associated Press*

Deutsche Bahn plans to prohibit alcohol consumption across German railway stations, with limited exceptions for licensed restaurants and designated events. The policy reflects growing concern about disorder and safety in public spaces and could affect station retailers and hospitality operators.

Back Bar

- [What Does 'Premium' Alcohol Actually Mean? Distillers Break Down the Buzzword – Man of Many](#)
Distillers and brand experts examine how “premium” can refer to price tier, production quality, provenance, craftsmanship or marketing—and why consumers increasingly demand evidence behind the claim. The article offers retailers useful language for explaining value beyond packaging and price.
- [California’s next big wine craze is breaking all the rules – San Francisco Chronicle \(\\$\)](#)
California winemakers are experimenting with unconventional grapes, formats and production techniques as they seek to attract younger and more adventurous consumers. The trend reflects a broader effort to make wine more approachable and culturally relevant during a period of declining category demand.
- [The AI Revolution Is Already Transforming Wine – Meininger’s International](#)
Artificial intelligence is increasingly being used across vineyard management, production, forecasting, marketing and consumer engagement. The article considers both the efficiency gains and the practical limits of applying AI in an industry still defined by agriculture, craftsmanship and human relationships.

Calendar

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| 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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