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ABL WEEKLY

POLICY, INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS NEWS
FOR BEVERAGE RETAILERS

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Let's Get Federal

- [**SAMHSA Releases Annual National Survey on Drug Use and Health**](#) – *SAMHSA*
SAMHSA released the 2025 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, the federal government's primary source of national data on substance use, mental health, treatment and recovery. The latest survey provides five years of trend data and highlights encouraging movement among adolescents and young adults, including continued declines in several measures of underage substance use.
- [**'Good day for Scotland': US lifts tariffs on Scotch**](#) – *The Spirits Business*
The United States formally restored tariff-free treatment for Scotch whisky on July 24. The return to a zero-for-zero tariff framework removes a major source of uncertainty for importers, distributors and retailers, although industry leaders continue to seek relief for other wine and spirits categories still affected by trade measures.
- [**We, the undersigned organizations, write today to call your attention to the negative health effects of alcohol**](#) – *Coalition Letter*
A coalition of public-health and consumer organizations urged Congress to support expanded alcohol labeling requirements as part of the administration's Make America Healthy Again agenda. The letter calls for moving forward with proposals intended to provide consumers with additional health and product information.
- [**VA to run trial of GLP-1 drug to treat alcohol abuse**](#) – *ABC News*
The Department of Veterans Affairs announced a clinical trial to test whether semaglutide, a GLP-1 medication widely prescribed for diabetes and weight loss, can also help treat alcohol use disorder. The study aims to enroll more than 600

veterans at 18 VA medical centers and could add to growing research on the drugs' potential effects on addiction and alcohol cravings.

Legal & Regulatory

- [**An Update on DtC Retailer Shipping Litigation**](#) – *Sovos ShipCompliant*
A new legal overview examines the widening split over state laws that permit direct-to-consumer shipping by in-state retailers while excluding out-of-state retailers. With Ohio asking the Supreme Court to review the Sixth Circuit's ruling against its restrictions, the Court could decide whether to take a case with nationwide implications for state authority, the three-tier system and retailer shipping.
- [**Think You're Compliant? States Are Taking a Closer Look at DTC Shipping Compliance, Regulations**](#) – *Wine Business*
State alcohol regulators are increasing scrutiny of direct-to-consumer shipping compliance, including sting operations involving underage purchasers and checks on age verification, licensing and delivery practices. The renewed enforcement activity underscores the operational and legal risks for businesses that treat DTC compliance as a paperwork exercise rather than an active regulatory obligation.
- [**Making Sense of Extended Producer Responsibility \(EPR\) Regulations: Key Insights for Beverage Alcohol Companies**](#) – *Sovos ShipCompliant*
Seven states have enacted extended producer responsibility laws that shift packaging-management costs to businesses defined as producers, with definitions, exemptions and reporting obligations varying by state. The guide explains how beverage alcohol companies—including some importers, brand owners, first sellers and remote sellers—may be affected by registration, reporting and fee requirements.
- [**OR: More pushback for Oregon's EPR program**](#) – *Plastics News*
Wine and spirits groups are pressing for changes to Oregon's extended producer responsibility program, arguing that weight-based fees unfairly penalize products packaged in glass even though the state recovers a substantial share of glass containers. The challenge adds to broader litigation and industry opposition surrounding the state's implementation of packaging responsibility requirements.
- [**Federal Appeals Courts Split on Spirit Distilling Ban**](#) – *Legis1*
Federal appeals courts have reached conflicting conclusions about the

constitutionality of the federal prohibition on at-home distilling. The Fifth Circuit held that the ban exceeds Congress's taxing and necessary-and-proper powers, while the Sixth Circuit upheld the law, creating legal uncertainty that could ultimately require Supreme Court review.

Industry

- [**RNDC Files for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy, Seeks Buyers for Remaining Operations**](#) – *VinePair*
Republic National Distributing Company filed for Chapter 11 protection to pursue additional asset sales and conduct an orderly wind-down of its remaining operations. The filing lists more than 100,000 creditors and liabilities estimated between \$1 billion and \$10 billion, while excluding National Distributing Company and most RNDC joint ventures.
- [**RNDC's Bankruptcy Puts Many Suppliers at the Back Of Line to Collect**](#) – *Brewbound (\$)*
RNDC's bankruptcy filing lists more than \$300 million among its 30 largest unsecured claims, leaving many wine and spirits suppliers behind secured lenders in the payment order. The immediate effect on most retailers should be limited where brands have transitioned to successor wholesalers, but smaller suppliers facing severe losses could encounter cash-flow problems, interrupted distribution or reduced market support.
- [**Sazerac Wants Another Shot at Jack Daniel's Maker Brown-Forman**](#) – *The Wall Street Journal (\$)*
Sazerac appealed directly to Brown-Forman's voting shareholders to reconsider its previously rejected \$15 billion acquisition proposal and indicated it may improve the terms. Brown-Forman and the Brown family shareholder group again rejected the approach, setting up a closely watched test of family control and consolidation in the supplier tier.
- [**Brown-Forman Board Issues Statement**](#) – *Business Wire*
Brown-Forman's board confirmed that it received Sazerac's unsolicited acquisition proposal and concluded that the offer was not actionable after considering the position of Wolf Pen Branch, the Brown family shareholder group that controls a majority of the company's Class A voting shares. Brown-Forman said it remains focused on executing its existing strategic plan and identifying its next chief executive.

- [Anheuser-Busch revenue rises 11% as pricing offsets declining U.S. beer shipments](#) – *St. Louis Business Journal* (\$)

Anheuser-Busch InBev reported strong quarterly revenue growth even as U.S. beer shipments remained under pressure. Pricing, global performance and growth from brands outside the traditional domestic beer portfolio helped offset weaker U.S. volume trends.

- [Edrington Aligns With Johnson Brothers In Four States](#) – *Johnson Brothers*
Edrington entered a new distribution partnership with Johnson Brothers in Indiana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota. The agreement adds prominent Scotch brands including The Macallan, Highland Park and The Glenrothes to Johnson Brothers' portfolio in those markets and reflects continuing supplier realignment across the wholesale tier.

- [WineAmerica Enters Its Next Chapter](#) – *Wine Industry Advisor*
WineAmerica announced that longtime executive Michael Kaiser will lead the organization's strategic priorities and day-to-day operations, including government affairs, communications, membership and organizational management. Kaiser has spent two decades with the association and will work with its board and industry partners to advance the interests of American wineries.

Cannabis & THC

- [Massachusetts must regulate cannabis like alcohol and tobacco](#) – *CommonWealth Beacon*

Rob Mellion argues that Massachusetts has failed to apply the same level of regulatory scrutiny, compliance enforcement and public-safety oversight to cannabis that it requires for alcohol and tobacco. The commentary calls for a more mature regulatory structure for the state's adult-use cannabis market.

- [More Americans now use weed every day than drink or smoke cigarettes](#) – *New York Post*

New SAMHSA data show that approximately 21.4 million Americans used marijuana daily or near-daily in 2025, compared with 17.2 million who consumed alcohol on at least 20 days in the prior month. The figures illustrate the rapid normalization of cannabis and raise new questions about regulation, impairment and public-health messaging.

- [Not Just a Cannabis Company: Tilray CEO Stresses Diversified Platform in FY26 Earnings Report](#) – *Brewbound (\$)*

Tilray emphasized its growing beverage and consumer-products portfolio as it seeks to reduce reliance on cannabis. The company's strategy illustrates the continuing convergence of cannabis, beer and other adult-beverage categories.

- [NC: Law enforcement, prosecutors call on NC House to pass hemp regulations](#) – *WUNC News*

North Carolina law-enforcement and prosecutor groups urged House lawmakers to approve a negotiated hemp-regulation package that could prohibit many products currently sold in the state. The debate follows years of unsuccessful legislative efforts to establish testing, age restrictions, product standards and enforcement authority.



Business & Market Watch

- [DoorDash changes how it calculates fees for consumers](#) – *Restaurant Business*

DoorDash is changing the way it presents and calculates consumer delivery and service fees, using a fixed delivery fee and a service fee tied to the order subtotal. The change may make costs easier to understand, but it also highlights the continuing importance of platform pricing and fee transparency for restaurants, bars and other merchants using third-party delivery.

- [Beer Industry Maintains Expansionary Footing](#) – *National Beer Wholesalers Association*

The July Beer Purchasers' Index registered 51, marking the fifth consecutive month at or above the expansion threshold of 50 and a nine-point improvement from the prior year. The combination of the general index and a 43 reading for at-risk inventory suggests the beer industry entered the rest of the summer in slightly expansionary territory.

- [June 2026 Control States Results](#) – *NABCA*

Control-state spirits sales strengthened in June, with nine-liter case volume increasing 4.8 percent and dollar volume rising 3.2 percent, aided by six additional selling days across several markets. Rolling 12-month results remained negative, however, with volume down 0.5 percent and dollar sales down 2.5 percent.

- [Bev-Alc Declines Persist as Summer Events Cool, per NIQ Weekly Scans](#) – *Brewbound (\$)*
Total beverage alcohol sales and volume remained below year-ago levels as the lift from Independence Day and the World Cup faded. Prepared cocktails continued to outperform the broader market, while wine posted the weakest results and beer and spirits remained under pressure.
- [Gambling becomes America’s favorite pastime as Americans spend more on sports bets than movies, arts, museums, and music combined](#) – *Fortune (\$)*
Americans placed roughly \$166 billion in sports wagers in 2025—more than the combined revenues of movies, recorded and live music, books and museums. For hospitality businesses, the unresolved question is whether sports betting complements the social experience of watching games at bars and restaurants or increasingly competes for the same discretionary dollars.
- [Consumer confidence slips in July amid concerns about grocery, fuel prices](#) – *Chain Store Age*
Consumer confidence weakened in July as households expressed greater concern about food, fuel and other everyday costs. The report reinforces evidence that shoppers remain value-conscious and selective with discretionary purchases, including beverage alcohol and dining out.

Associate Member Spotlight



Provi

Provi is a digital marketplace and ordering platform built for the beverage alcohol industry. The company connects licensed bars, restaurants and retailers with distributor portfolios, pricing and product information, helping buyers streamline ordering, product discovery and communication with sales representatives. Provi says its marketplace includes more than 750,000 active products and distributor portfolios across 49 states.

[Visit Provi »](#)

States

- [**LA: No More Alcohol Permits Will Be Allowed in Several Shreveport Neighborhoods**](#) – *KEEL News*
New Louisiana laws impose a moratorium through 2027 on certain new alcohol permits in portions of Shreveport and Bossier City. The measures include an exemption for national chains operating in at least 10 states, raising questions about unequal treatment of independent businesses.
- [**LA: Harsher DWI Penalties in Louisiana to Start August 2026**](#) – *97.3 The Dawg*
Louisiana is increasing penalties for repeat impaired-driving offenses beginning in August. Supporters say the tougher sanctions are intended to address serious crashes and reduce recidivism among drivers with multiple DWI convictions.
- [**MI: New Bill Prevents Price Hikes for Michigan Spirits**](#) – *Spirits Business*
Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed legislation capping certain supplier fees paid to authorized distribution agents, a change supported by the Michigan Spirits Association. The group says the law will provide greater predictability for suppliers and strengthen the state's native distilled spirits industry.
- [**MO: Jackson County judge pauses enforcement of ban on single-use alcohol sales in specific areas in KCMO**](#) – *KSHB 41*
A Jackson County judge issued a preliminary injunction preventing Kansas City from enforcing a geographically targeted ban on single-shot alcohol and certain beer sales while litigation proceeds. Retailers challenging the ordinance argue that it would threaten longstanding businesses without addressing the underlying public-safety concerns.
- [**NJ: New Jersey enacted a sweeping alcohol licensing overhaul on July 23**](#) – *Vinetur*
New Jersey enacted a broad alcohol-law package revising craft producer privileges, license transfers and brewery, winery and distillery categories. The changes represent one of the state's most significant recent updates to its beverage alcohol licensing framework.
- [**NY: In a Major Win for New York's Wine Industry, Governor Hochul Announces Vine Enterprises LLC Will Invest \\$47 Million to Acquire and Modernize the Former Pleasant Valley Winery in Steuben County**](#) – *New York State*
Vine Enterprises plans to invest at least \$47 million to acquire and redevelop the

historic Pleasant Valley Winery in the Finger Lakes. The project is expected to restore production, create more than 60 jobs and provide new economic activity for grape growers and the regional wine industry.

- [NC: By a Margin of More Than 4-to-1, North Carolina Voters Oppose the Proposed Price Increase by the ABC Commission](#) – *North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association*

A statewide survey found that 55 percent of North Carolina voters oppose the ABC Commission's proposed minimum baseline pricing policy for distilled spirits, while 12 percent support it. Nearly half said a price increase of 25 percent or more would cause them to dine out less often, underscoring the potential impact on restaurants and bars.

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

- [Alcohol consumption in Ireland falls in 2025](#) – *The Spirits Business*
Average adult alcohol consumption in Ireland declined again in 2025 and is now more than one-third below its 2001 peak. Industry groups are using the figures to renew calls for a 10 percent reduction in alcohol excise taxes to ease pressure on pubs, restaurants and consumers.
- [Vintage Fears as Bordeaux Burns](#) – *Wine-Searcher*
Wildfires surrounding Bordeaux have created immediate human and economic

concerns while threatening vineyards, tourism and the 2026 vintage. The crisis comes amid additional fires in Spain, Oregon and British Columbia and highlights the increasing exposure of wine regions to extreme weather and smoke risk.

- [Wildfires threaten historic vineyards in Sierra de Gredos](#) – *The Drinks Business*
Severe wildfires in Spain's Sierra de Gredos have damaged historic old-vine Garnacha and Albillo Real vineyards and forced evacuations across the region. Producers warn that the full effect on vineyards, local businesses and the rural economy will not be known until the fires are contained.
 - [One dead in Guadeloupe distillery explosion](#) – *The Spirits Business*
A boiler explosion at the Montebello rum distillery killed one worker, critically injured two others and halted production. Authorities are investigating the cause of what officials described as Guadeloupe's most serious industrial accident in decades.
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Back Bar

- [Margarita sales slow as the Martini shakes up US cocktails](#) – *The Spirits Business*
The Margarita remains the most popular cocktail in the U.S. on-premise, but its dollar velocity fell 16 percent year over year in late 2025 as consumers broadened their preferences. Martinis, Bellinis, Mimosas and Old Fashioneds gained ground, illustrating how quickly cocktail demand can shift.
 - [Why electrolytes have become wine's newest additive](#) – *The Drinks Business*
A new canned Sauvignon Blanc spritz from Joel Gott Wines combines wine, sparkling water and electrolytes in an effort to recruit younger, wellness-oriented consumers. The launch reflects the growing use of functional claims—including hydration, low sugar and low calories—in wine-adjacent products.
 - [Hard seltzer loses its sparkle as the RTD market evolves](#) – *The Spirits Business*
Hard seltzer volumes have declined from their pandemic-era peak as consumers migrate toward spirits-based cocktails, higher-ABV products and nonalcoholic alternatives. The category remains substantial, but suppliers are increasingly repositioning products around vodka soda, cocktails and broader RTD language.
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Calendar

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 11-13	ABL Fall Board of Directors Meeting – Orlando, FL
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.

American Beverage Licensees

5101 River Rd., Suite 108, Bethesda, MD 20816

Phone: (301) 656-1494

www.ABLUSA.org

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