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ABL WEEKLY

POLICY, INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS NEWS
FOR BEVERAGE RETAILERS

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Let's Get Federal

- [Senate tables hemp amendment at center of funding fight, allowing one-month delay of ban](#) – *The Hill*

The Senate voted 61-32 to table an amendment that would have removed a one-month delay of the new federal hemp definition from the chamber's government funding bill. The Senate later approved the continuing resolution, which would move implementation of the hemp restrictions from November 12 to December 11 while leaving in place the prohibition on synthetic intoxicating cannabinoids. The House must still act on the Senate funding measure before the extension can become law.

Related ABL Advocacy:

- [ABL Letter to Congressional Leadership on Hemp Provision in Continuing Resolution](#) – *August 4*
- [Beverage Industry and Retail Coalition Letter Supporting Hemp Extension](#) – *August 5*
- [Coalition Letter to Senate Leadership Supporting Hemp Extension](#) – *August 6*

- [Common Cents Act Passes Senate, Bringing Closer National Standard on Penny Rounding](#) – *American Logistics Association*

The Senate passed the Common Cents Act on August 7, moving Congress closer to establishing a uniform federal standard for cash rounding as the penny is phased out. The measure would round cash transaction totals to the nearest five cents while leaving electronic payments unchanged. Because the Senate approved an amended version, the legislation must return to the House before it can be sent to the President.

- [Lummis, Moreno Join Credit Card Competition Act As Interchange Threat Grows](#) – *CU Today*

Sens. Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) and Bernie Moreno (R-OH) have joined the Credit

Card Competition Act as cosponsors, giving the legislation additional Republican support as Congress heads into the August recess. The bill would require the largest credit-card issuers to enable at least two unaffiliated payment networks, an approach supported by merchant groups seeking greater competition and lower swipe-fee pressure.

- **[New Congressional Bill Would Require Drinks With Cannabis, Alcohol Or Kratom To Have Color-Coded Labels](#)** – *Marijuana Moment*

Rep. Nick LaLota (R-NY) introduced the Safe Sips Act, which would direct federal officials to create a common color identifier for beverages containing alcohol, THC, kratom-related compounds and other intoxicating substances. The proposal would also require a non-color identifier for consumers who are blind or colorblind, with FDA and TTB sharing implementation responsibilities.

Legal & Regulatory

- **[FTC, Southern Glazer Need More Time To Finalize Settlement](#)** – *Law360* (\$)

The Federal Trade Commission and Southern Glazer's asked a federal judge for more time to finalize the proposed settlement of the agency's Robinson-Patman Act case. The parties requested that the stay be extended through September 4 while they complete a proposed order and secure the required Commission vote. The case alleges that Southern Glazer's gave large chains pricing advantages not available to smaller independent retailers.

- **[New Report Finds Global Alcohol-Attributable Mortality Has Fallen by 26% Since 2010](#)** – *Business Wire*

An analysis released by the International Alliance for Responsible Drinking using Global Burden of Disease data found that the age-standardized alcohol-attributable mortality rate declined approximately 26 percent worldwide between 2010 and 2024. IARD cautioned that regional differences remain significant, but said the findings provide evidence of progress toward international goals for reducing alcohol-related harm.

Industry

- **[RNDC court filings reveal scale of distributor's financial collapse](#)** – *The Drinks Business*

New bankruptcy filings detail more than \$400 million in unsecured debt at Republic National Distributing Company and show how falling sales, inventory pressure, lost supplier relationships and increasingly costly contract renewals

contributed to the distributor's collapse. For retailers, the immediate concern remains continuity of brand supply as successor distributors absorb portfolios and smaller suppliers contend with significant unpaid balances.

- **Southern Glazer's expands Colorado footprint with Eagle Rock acquisition** – *The Drinks Business*

Southern Glazer's completed its acquisition of substantially all of Eagle Rock Distributing's Colorado operations, adding Anheuser-Busch brands and a broad portfolio of beer, RTD and non-alcoholic products. The transaction expands Southern Glazer's total-beverage strategy and represents another significant consolidation move in the U.S. wholesale tier.

- **MGP's whiskey sales plunge 59% in Q2** – *The Spirits Business*

MGP Ingredients reported a 59 percent decline in whiskey sales during the second quarter as demand for aged and new-distillate whiskey remained weak. The company has paused operations at two Kentucky distilleries and is focusing on rebuilding its aged-whiskey pipeline while emphasizing higher-performing premium brands such as Penelope Bourbon and Yellowstone.

- **Cutwater Is Becoming a \$1 Billion Brand by Doing the Opposite of What Everyone Else in Alcohol Is Doing** – *Inc.*

Cutwater is approaching \$1 billion in annual sales and has become one of AB InBev's biggest U.S. growth engines. The spirits-based RTD brand has expanded with a portfolio of relatively high-ABV canned cocktails, illustrating the continued strength of convenience-oriented prepared cocktails even as many traditional beverage alcohol categories face softer demand.

- **World Spirits Alliance confirms CEO departure** – *The Spirits Business*

Helen Medina has stepped down as CEO of the World Spirits Alliance after more than two years leading the global trade association. WSA credited Medina with helping establish the organization as an international voice for the spirits sector and said it is beginning a search for new leadership.

Cannabis & THC

- **More Americans now use weed every day than drink or smoke cigarettes** – *New York Post*

New federal survey data show approximately 21.4 million Americans used marijuana daily or near-daily in 2025, compared with 17.2 million who drank

alcohol on at least 20 days during the prior month and 19.9 million frequent cigarette smokers. Overall alcohol participation remains far larger, but the data illustrate the increasing frequency of cannabis use among regular users.

Business & Market Watch

- [Alcohol sales seek stable footing in late July as weekly trends improve – N/Q](#)
Total beverage alcohol dollar sales reached \$9.1 billion during the four weeks ending July 25, down 3.2 percent from a year earlier, while case volume declined 4.8 percent. Prepared cocktails remained the only major category posting dollar growth, while wine saw the steepest declines and beer and spirits continued to face softer demand.
 - [The Regulatory Costs of Wine Production in Napa County – Cal Poly](#)
A Cal Poly case study of a small Napa Valley winery estimates regulatory compliance costs at \$13.44 per case for production alone and \$23.65 per case when direct-to-consumer sales requirements are included. The study calculates that regulatory compliance represents 17.5 percent of total production costs for the winery examined, highlighting the cumulative burden of overlapping alcohol, labor, environmental and sales requirements.
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Associate Member Spotlight



City Hive

City Hive is an all-in-one commerce and marketing platform built for the three-tier beverage alcohol industry. Its technology helps independent wine and spirits retailers operate custom websites and mobile apps, connect online and in-store inventory, manage marketing and fulfillment, and participate in marketplace integrations while maintaining direct relationships with their customers. City Hive also provides technology solutions for distributors and suppliers

across the industry. [Visit City Hive »](#)

States

- [AZ: Bars must offer drink spike detection kits to customers under Tempe ordinance](#) – *ABC15 Arizona*

A Tempe ordinance that took effect August 1 requires roughly 60 bars and restaurants that serve alcohol late at night to make drink-spike detection kits available and post awareness notices. Establishments may qualify for a liquor-license tax rebate if they also provide drink covers, properly store tests and meet quarterly reporting requirements.

- [CA: Significant change hits California self checkouts as shoppers allowed to buy controlled substances](#) – *New York Post*

A Sacramento cannabis dispensary has launched what it describes as California's first marijuana self-checkout kiosks, allowing customers to scan RFID-tagged products and complete purchases after required identification checks. The technology highlights the rapid modernization of cannabis retail and the increasingly different compliance models governing cannabis and beverage alcohol sales.

- [CA: California wine sales to Canada fell 77.7% in 2025](#) – *Vinetur*

California wine sales to Canada fell from \$404 million in 2024 to \$90 million in 2025 as Canadian provinces restricted U.S. alcohol products amid the broader trade dispute. The \$314 million decline adds to pressure on California wineries already confronting excess inventory, reduced consumer demand and a large volume of unharvested grapes.

- [NY: SPECIAL REPORT: CNY Brew Bust](#) – *Oswego County Business Magazine*

Central New York's craft brewing sector is confronting a wave of closures after years of rapid expansion. Industry leaders point to changing consumer tastes, higher operating costs, reduced taproom traffic and competition from other beverage and entertainment options, arguing that breweries increasingly need disciplined financial management and diversified revenue streams to succeed.



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

- [Could Soho pubs be forced to ban standing pints and become table-service only?](#) – *Time Out*

Westminster Council is considering new approaches to crowd management in Soho that could require some pubs to limit standing drinking and move toward table service. Hospitality operators argue that restrictions on traditional pub service could reduce capacity and undermine the character and economics of one of London's most important nightlife districts.

Back Bar

- [The social cost of sobriety](#) – *Axios*
As alcohol consumption declines, the article examines what may be lost when bars and other informal gathering places see fewer customers. It considers the role taverns, pubs and restaurants have historically played as accessible “third places” for spontaneous social interaction and asks how communities can preserve connection as drinking habits change.
- [Are campers a massive untapped market for drinks?](#) – *The Drinks Business*
With outdoor recreation and camping attracting a broad mix of consumers, beverage marketers are looking more closely at the category as a potential occasion for beer, wine, spirits and non-alcoholic products. The article explores why drinks brands have historically under-marketed to campers and what might change.

 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
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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.

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