

A PUBLICATION OF AMERICAN BEVERAGE LICENSEES

ABL WEEKLY

POLICY, INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS NEWS
FOR BEVERAGE RETAILERS

Issue 565 | September 13, 2026

Trade & Tariffs

- [Trump bans Canadian spirits imports](#) – *The Spirits Business*
The Spirits Business reviews the Trump administration's near-total ban on Canadian alcohol imports, the Canadian measures that preceded it and the potential effects on distillers and other beverage alcohol businesses as the trade dispute escalates.
- [ABL & WSWA Statement on U.S.-Canada Tariffs Affecting Beverage Alcohol](#) – *American Beverage Licensees & WSWA*
ABL and WSWA urged the United States and Canada to return to negotiations and warned that escalating restrictions on beverage alcohol will harm businesses and consumers on both sides of the border. The statement emphasized that retailers, distributors and suppliers need a durable negotiated solution that restores normal trade.
- [American Spirits Industry Responds to Trump's Canadian Alcohol Ban With Call for a 'Negotiated Solution'](#) – *Daily Pour via Yahoo Finance*
U.S. spirits groups responded to the new Canadian alcohol ban by calling for a negotiated resolution rather than further escalation. Industry leaders warned that retaliatory measures have already disrupted cross-border beverage alcohol trade and damaged producers, distributors and retailers.
- [Distilleries to bear brunt of U.S. ban on Canadian booze: experts](#) – *CityNews / The Canadian Press*
Canadian distillers are expected to bear much of the impact from the new U.S. import ban because the American market is especially important for spirits. Industry experts said smaller producers may have fewer options to redirect inventory or absorb the loss of U.S. sales.
- [Canadian whisky on the rocks? Crown Royal is set to avoid Trump's new ban.](#) – *MarketWatch*
Crown Royal appears positioned to avoid the new import ban because whisky

destined for U.S. consumers is bottled domestically after arriving in bulk. The exception illustrates how the proclamation's treatment of bulk alcohol could soften the impact for some brands while leaving others exposed.

Legal Brief(ly)

- [Nationwide Alcohol Distributor Agrees To Pay Over \\$12 Million To Resolve Federal Investigation Into Bribery And False Invoicing Practices](#) – U.S. Department of Justice
Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits agreed to pay more than \$12 million to resolve a federal investigation into commercial bribery and false invoicing. Federal prosecutors said improper payments were used to induce certain retailers to purchase alcohol products and were concealed through third-party affiliates and false invoices.
 - [TTB Trade Practice Investigation into Commercial Bribery Results in \\$12.5 Million Payment](#) – TTB
TTB said its trade-practice investigation found that Southern Glazer's used third-party affiliates and false invoicing in a pay-to-play scheme involving retailers. The \$12.5 million resolution is one of the agency's most significant recent trade-practice enforcement actions.
 - [Southern Glazer's Statement on Resolution with U.S. Department of Justice](#) – Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits
Southern Glazer's said the resolution closes a lengthy federal investigation and emphasized that it cooperated with authorities and has strengthened its compliance program. The company said it remains committed to lawful and ethical business practices.
-

Cannabis & Hemp

- [Hemp Cos. Win Block Of New Ohio THC Regulations](#) – Law360 (\$)
An Ohio federal judge blocked enforcement of a new state law that would classify products containing more than 0.3 percent THC as cannabis. The court found that hemp companies had shown a sufficient likelihood that the law discriminates against interstate commerce.
- [Hemp Beverage Alliance welcomes three new board members](#) – Hemp Beverage Alliance
The Hemp Beverage Alliance announced three new members of its board of directors as the organization expands its advocacy work around federal and state regulation of hemp-derived THC beverages.

- [Mass. cannabis sector hits \\$10 billion in sales ahead of repeal vote](#) – *WBUR*
Massachusetts’ legal cannabis market has surpassed \$10 billion in sales as voters prepare to consider a ballot question that could repeal adult-use cannabis sales. The milestone highlights the scale of the state’s cannabis marketplace and the stakes surrounding the repeal effort.
-

Association World

- [Beer Institute Releases July 2026 Taxable Removals Estimate](#) – *Beer Institute*
The Beer Institute released its July 2026 estimate of taxable removals, providing an updated look at domestic beer shipments as the industry continues to navigate softer consumer demand and a difficult summer selling environment.
 - [National Restaurant Association Launches “Made in Restaurants” to Celebrate Industry’s Role in Building America](#) – *National Restaurant Association*
The National Restaurant Association launched its Made in Restaurants initiative to highlight the restaurant industry’s role in jobs, entrepreneurship, local economies and American culture. The campaign is designed to give operators and partners new tools to tell the industry’s story.
 - [SipSource July 2026: Wine and Spirits Are Starting to Tell Different Stories](#) – *WSWA*
WSWA’s July SipSource data show wine and spirits beginning to diverge, with different category, channel and price-tier trends emerging as the market resets. The report provides wholesalers and retailers with a more granular view of where demand is stabilizing and where weakness persists.
 - [Wine Institute Tests New Approach to Coordinated Storytelling During California Wine Month](#) – *Wine Institute*
Wine Institute launched a free Pour Outside the Lines toolkit to help wineries and industry partners coordinate messaging during California Wine Month and amplify stories about the state’s wine regions, producers and consumer experiences.
-

Regulation Nation

- [Direct-to-Consumer Shipping and Dry Territories: What Producers Need to Know](#) – *Sovos ShipCompliant*
Sovos reviews the complexities producers face when shipping directly to consumers in dry or partially dry jurisdictions. The article highlights how local restrictions can overlay state shipping permissions and create compliance risks for wineries and other direct shippers.
- [VinoCheck Makes DtC Compliance Easier, More Accurate and Affordable for Wineries](#) – *Wine Industry Advisor*

VinoCheck has launched a compliance tool designed to help wineries identify where direct-to-consumer shipments are legally permitted. The service aims to simplify address-level compliance checks and reduce the risk of shipping into prohibited jurisdictions.

- [Rare wine scammer gets 6 years in multimillion-dollar Brooklyn fraud case](#) – *New York Daily News*
A Brooklyn defendant was sentenced to six years in prison for a multimillion-dollar rare-wine fraud scheme involving counterfeit or nonexistent bottles. The case underscores the risks created by high-value wine transactions and the importance of provenance and trusted sales channels.

Industry

- [Republic National Distributing Company: The Last Two Weeks](#) – *Chapter11Cases / Stretto*
RNDC's bankruptcy moved further into its wind-down phase, with the company closing its Reyes settlement, filing debtor schedules and placing its control-state business under contract with Martignetti. A late-September claims deadline is also approaching.
- [Reyes' Premium Subsidiary to Add 2 Counties from Western Maryland Distributing](#) – *Brewbound (\$)*
Reyes Beverage Group agreed to acquire the business of Western Maryland Distributing in Garrett and Allegany counties. The deal will expand Premium Distributors of Maryland's footprint and is expected to close October 30.
- [Genesee Brewery owner sold to Pa. private equity firm](#) – *Rochester Beacon*
FIFCO USA, owner of Genesee Brewery, Labatt USA and Seagram's Escapes, has been acquired by Pennsylvania-based Saothair Capital Partners. The company will return to the North American Breweries name under its new ownership.
- [Southern Glazer's New Report Identifies Five Growth Opportunities as Beverage Alcohol Resets](#) – *Southern Glazer's Wine & Spirits*
Southern Glazer's latest Commercial Intelligence report identifies five areas of opportunity as beverage alcohol consumers focus more heavily on value, convenience, choice and moderation. The report points to shifts in occasions, formats and channel behavior that could shape retailer and supplier strategies.
- [Scotland has a whisky problem](#) – *Financial Times (\$)*
Scotland's whisky industry is grappling with excess inventory, weaker global demand and pressure on newer distilleries after years of expansion. Producers are slowing output, delaying projects and searching for ways to work through stocks built for a stronger market.

- [Ashland-based Wine & Beer Supply hops into acquisition of Maryland firm](#) – *Richmond BizSense*

Virginia-based Wine & Beer Supply acquired a Maryland company as it continues expanding its services to beverage producers. The transaction adds scale and geographic reach in a sector serving breweries, wineries and other alcohol businesses.

Business & Market Watch

- [Think Gen Z Doesn't Drink? New Data Tells A More Complicated Story](#) – *Forbes*
New consumer data challenge the idea that Gen Z is uniformly abandoning alcohol. Younger adults may drink less frequently overall, but many still participate in beverage alcohol occasions and show interest in specific formats, brands and social settings.
 - [Young Diners Turn to ChatGPT to Choose Wine](#) – *Vinetur*
Reports from France and Spain suggest younger consumers are increasingly using ChatGPT and other AI tools for wine pairing and purchase advice instead of relying exclusively on sommeliers or store staff. The trend could change how retailers and restaurants approach wine education and recommendations.
 - [Why fine wine is losing the luxury battle](#) – *The Drinks Business*
Fine wine is losing ground to other luxury categories as younger affluent consumers spend on travel, fashion, watches and experiences. The article examines how the sector's traditional prestige model is being challenged by changing definitions of luxury.
 - [Blue Nun is back with a vengeance](#) – *The Drinks Business*
Blue Nun is enjoying renewed visibility as nostalgia and accessible wine styles attract a new generation of consumers. The comeback illustrates how legacy brands can find fresh relevance through cultural cycles and value positioning.
-

Associate Member Spotlight



Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America

Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America is the national trade association representing distributors of wine and spirits. WSWA advocates for a competitive and accountable three-tier marketplace, provides economic and market intelligence through programs including SipSource, and works on federal and state policy issues affecting beverage alcohol distribution, responsible commerce and consumer choice. [Visit WSWA »](#)

States

- [CO: 'I don't think that anybody... expected it to get this bad,' drought is impacting Colorado's beer industry](#) – *Denver7*
Colorado brewers are confronting drought-related pressure on water supplies and agricultural inputs, raising concerns about costs and availability for an industry that depends heavily on water, barley and hops.
- [ID: Idaho data: drug offenses up 25% since 2005 as alcohol offenses drop 59%](#) – *Idaho News*
New Idaho data show drug offenses have increased over the past two decades while alcohol-related offenses have fallen sharply. The shift provides another measure of changing substance-use and enforcement patterns.
- [KY: One of America's largest liquor stores is opening in Northern Kentucky](#) – *Cincinnati Enquirer*
A large-format liquor retailer is preparing to open in Northern Kentucky, adding another major destination store to the region's beverage alcohol marketplace.
- [NH: No Booze? No Problem. NH Businesses Lean Into the Alcohol-Free Trend.](#) – *BusinessNH Magazine / NHPR*
New Hampshire restaurants, bars and retailers are expanding alcohol-free offerings as more consumers seek moderation without giving up social beverage occasions. Businesses say the category is becoming a more meaningful part of menus and retail shelves.
- [NY: Wine at grocery stores could be back on the 2027 shopping list](#) – *City & State New York*
New York lawmakers and industry stakeholders revisited the long-running debate over wine sales in grocery stores during a recent policy forum. The issue could return as a major legislative fight in 2027.
- [SC: MADD pushes for stronger South Carolina DUI laws after reform bill fails](#) – *WLTX News19*
MADD is renewing its push for stronger South Carolina impaired-driving laws after a reform bill failed during the legislative session. The debate follows hundreds of DUI arrests over Labor Day weekend.
- [UT: This website can help you track Utah liquor prices](#) – *Axios Salt Lake City*
A Utah cocktail enthusiast created an online tool that tracks state liquor-store prices, new products and closeouts. The site gives consumers another way to navigate Utah's state-controlled retail system.
- [WI: DataWatch: The overlooked risks of walking while intoxicated](#) – *Wisconsin Watch*
Wisconsin crash data show nearly one in five pedestrians killed since 2017 were

suspected of drinking. The analysis highlights alcohol-related traffic risk beyond impaired driving and raises questions for broader prevention policy.

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

- [**India: 11 dead after consuming poisonous alcohol in Madhya Pradesh**](#) – *The Drinks Business*
At least 11 people died and dozens were hospitalized after reportedly consuming illegally made alcohol in Madhya Pradesh. The incident is another reminder of the severe public-health risks associated with illicit and counterfeit alcohol.
 - [**Belgium is changing how alcohol is marketed - will it change drinking habits?**](#) – *The Brussels Times*
Belgium is tightening alcohol marketing rules as policymakers seek to reduce harmful consumption. The article examines whether advertising restrictions are likely to change drinking behavior and how the new approach compares with other European policies.
-

Back Bar

- [**All of the Cocktails Named After U.S. States, Mapped**](#) – *VinePair*
VinePair maps cocktails named after U.S. states, highlighting the regional stories, ingredients and traditions behind drinks that carry a state name.
- [**Does Hospitality Suffer When a Top Cocktail Bar Goes All-in on Reservations?**](#) – *VinePair*
As more top cocktail bars adopt reservation-heavy models, the article asks whether predictability and efficiency come at the expense of spontaneity, accessibility and the traditional social character of bars.
- [**Is your beer being 'deceptive' about where it is brewed?**](#) – *The Drinks Business*
A new consumer tool aims to show where supermarket beer is actually brewed,

adding to a broader conversation about provenance, contract production and transparency in beer branding.

- [Why alcohol-free drinks aren't a 'gateway' to booze but a path to moderation](#) – *The Drinks Business*
New research and market trends suggest alcohol-free drinks are more often used as moderation tools than as a pathway into alcohol consumption. The article looks at how no- and low-alcohol products are becoming part of mixed drinking repertoires.
-

Calendar

- 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
- October 1-2** 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 |
| April 17-19, 2027 | 2027 ABL Annual Meeting – Omni Louisville Hotel – Louisville, KY |
-



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

If you would like to unsubscribe: **click here**
