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Contact: Jason Maymon
773 573-5900
jmaymonpr@gmail.com

Kim Morreale
847-401-8564
k.morreale@yahoo.com

AGREEMENT IS REACHED FOR WINE DIRECT SHIPPING BILL

Key Stakeholders Will Ask General Assembly to Take Action This Month

SPRINGFIELD—(April xx, 2007) – After over a year of negotiations key stakeholders involved in resolving the wine shipping issue have agreed on compromise language. The Associated Beer Distributors of Illinois (ABDI), Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Association (IGGVA), Wine Institute, Wine and Spirit Distributors of Illinois (WSDI), Beverage Retailers Alliance of Illinois (BRAI) and Illinois Retail Merchants Association (IRMA) have agreed to support SB123 and HB 429, legislation that would regulate wine shipments for in-state and out-of-state wineries. The group will ask legislators to vote on the compromise when the General Assembly reconvenes in mid-April.

The need to address winery shipments was necessitated by the 2005 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Granholm vs. Heald*—which ruled that if states allow in-state wineries to ship, they cannot prevent unregulated, unlimited and untaxed shipments by out-of-state wineries into Illinois. The industry compromise will be amended into SB 123 and HB 429. The compromise allows the vital three-tier system to continue its regulatory function while protecting the interests of the state, Illinois business, agriculture and consumers.

ABDI has taken the lead by hosting several meetings to work out differences that had all sides at odds. “The affected industry parties worked together to figure out what we could agree on and then collaborated as a team to reach a compromise on the rest,” said Bill Olson, President of the Associated Beer Distributors of Illinois.

Under the compromise, a winery will be allowed to ship up to 12-cases of wine per person per year. **(Will include other major issues)**

“We support the current legislative efforts that are on the table, says Paul Renzaglia, IGGVA President. We were committed to preserving our ability to ship to consumers and under this legislation; we have been successful in accomplishing our ultimate goal.” The compromise also allows small wineries to develop a market for their wines by selling directly to retailers

“What made this process complicated is that each group represented had individual interests on the table”, says Jerry Rosen, President of the Beverage Retailers Alliance of Illinois. “We are supportive of this legislation because it eliminates the discriminatory treatment between in-state and out-of-state wineries, which was the issue in the *Granholm* decision while keeping the brick or mortar beverage retailers in Illinois in a fair marketplace.”

Until legislation is passed, Illinois remains in violation of the 2005 Supreme Court ruling. As a result, Illinois is vulnerable to lawsuits and the possibility of wine shipments being shut down entirely until a law is passed that is considered fair. Originally, Sen. Ira Silverstein (D-Chicago) introduced SB 2180, which passed the Illinois Senate 52-0 but stalled in the House and was never called to vote along with HB 4350, which was introduced by Rep. Lou Lang (D-Skokie). SB 123 and HB 429 are the latest versions of legislation created to address *Granholm vs. Heald*.

“We made progress by opening the lines of communication and allowing everyone the opportunity to provide input. I am pleased that we will all stand united and support senate bill 123 and house bill 429 next week,” says Olson.

The Associated Beer Distributors of Illinois is a not for profit business trade association which represents a group of family owned distributors who provide customized inventory management for all retailers to ensure products are delivered fresh and efficiently to restaurants, stores and bars. ABDI operates under a regulated system, licensed by the State of Illinois, to ensure that the sale of beer is legal. It only sells to licensed retailers who in turn are responsible for selling alcohol only to adults of the legal drinking age.

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