



*Advocating the views of convenience stores, supermarkets,
independent grocers, wholesalers and consumer product vendors.*

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PFMA submits testimony in support of expanded alcohol sales

HARRISBURG, Pa. (November 1, 2019) – Alex Baloga, President & CEO of the Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association, submitted written testimony Tuesday to the Pennsylvania State Senate Law & Justice Committee in support of increased customer choice and convenience for alcohol sales at retail establishments in the state.

The committee considered legislation to increase the retail outlets that sell spirits, specifically Senate Bills 548, 880, and 916, as well as legislation pertaining to license availability, Senate Bill 896 and House Bill 1617. It also heard testimony on customer convenience reforms to Act 39 of 2016.

“We support increased consumer choice and convenience for our customers and, in the case of expanded spirits availability, additional outlets for Pennsylvania distilleries to offer their products, particularly in light of the growing popularity of such businesses.” Baloga wrote, adding that PFMA has not endorsed legislation to this point and is studying the proposals.

Namely, PFMA supports:

- Removing restrictions on merchandising;
- Ending register segregation and quantity restrictions;
- Conversion of unused licenses;
- Inter-county sales of unbidden licenses; and
- Expanded availability of spirits

“We commend the sponsors of the bills being discussed here today for recognizing these needs and drafting legislation to begin the process of updating our laws,” Baloga wrote. “As we have on similar issues, we want to work with legislators, administration officials, and fellow stakeholders to put together a package that moves the ball forward for our members and, more importantly, for their customers.”

PFMA also supports strict age-proofing standards, including carding every customer for every sale, every time. Whether preventing sales to those under age 21 or to visibly intoxicated persons, PFMA members continually teach their employees about detecting fake photo IDs and recognizing when a customer must not be served.

“Accordingly, we thank the members and staff of the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board for the valuable training resources and opportunities they provide to retailers,” Baloga said. “We remain committed to working with state and municipal authorities to ensure that convenience never comes at the cost of safety.”

About PFMA

The Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association, a statewide trade association, advocates the views of nearly 800 convenience stores, supermarkets, independent grocers, wholesalers and consumer product vendors. PFMA members operate more than 3,500 stores and employ more than 200,000 Pennsylvanians. For more information on PFMA, visit www.pfma.org.