



California Alcohol Policy Alliance

CAPA Members:

Alcohol Justice

CA Council on Alcohol Problems

Eden Youth and Family Center

Institute for Public Strategies

FreeMUNI – SF

Friday Night Live

Koreatown Youth and Community Center

L.A. Drug & Alcohol Policy Alliance

Lutheran Office of Public Policy – California

Partnership for a Positive Pomona

Paso por Paso, Inc.

Pueblo y Salud

San Rafael Alcohol & Drug Coalition

SF DogPAC

Saving Lives Drug & Alcohol Coalition

The Wall / Las Memorias Project

UCEPP Social Model Recovery Systems

Youth for Justice

Public Health Advocates Hopeful About ABC Changes

SACRAMENTO, CA (September 7, 2016) – After an unprecedented meeting with the California Alcoholic Beverage Control Department (ABC), public health advocates are cautiously optimistic about a new level of cooperation and respect for community interests.

“We will be watching to see how actions improve, but we’re encouraged by what we’ve heard so far,” said Thania Balcorta, co-chair of the [California Alcohol Policy Alliance \(CAPA\)](#). *“We don’t know of another case in which ABC leaders have reached out to community representatives to solicit suggestions on how the agency can be more responsive.”*

Representatives of public health and community organizations from across the state met with new Chief Deputy Director, Helena Williams, General Counsel, Matthew Botting, Chief Counsel, Jacob Rambo, and Information Officer, John Carr, to share their concerns and requests for how the department could be more responsive to alcohol-related public health and safety problems in communities across the state.

While the stated mission of the ABC is to, “administer the provisions of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act in a manner that fosters and protects the health, safety, welfare, and economic well being of the people of the State,” public health and safety advocates and communities across California believe they have significantly strayed from this approach. Advocates cited regular granting of alcohol licenses against community protests, in areas of high crime and those well beyond the number of alcohol licenses allowed by state law.

“We believe this meeting is the first step in a new and positive working relationship between public health and safety advocates and the ABC,” said Eric Collins, chair of the [San Diego Alcohol Policy Panel](#).

Members of CAPA and others at the meeting shared their appreciation for many of the things ABC has done over the years --including the coordination of minor decoy and shoulder tap operations at retail alcohol stores and support for responsible beverage service training.

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Jorge Castillo, Advocacy Director * 415-257-2488 * jorgec@alcoholjustice.org
So. Cal.: 1024 North Maclay Avenue #M-13 * San Fernando, CA 91340 * 818-837-2272





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They also raised serious concerns regarding how they've seen the department routinely ignore community interests in favor of industry interests by granting most alcohol applications and failing to address repeated violations of operating standards at current licensees.

To this end, the group shared the following requests with ABC:

- Continue shoulder tap and decoy enforcement programs related to on-premise alcohol retailers (such as liquor stores and markets).
- Reinstate ABC Responsible Beverage Service training certification process to verify that RBS courses follow a set of standards based on the latest expert scientific research.
- Re-establish the RBS Advisory Board to again ensure that the training adhere to best practices and is conducted by qualified instructors.
- Conduct more ABC undercover operations to deter the over-service of alcohol at restaurants, bars and nightclubs. Follow-up on repeated violations of operating standards at neighborhood markets, liquor and convenience stores.
- Establish a more user-friendly website for alcohol prevention providers and community members.
- Rein in the out-of-control morphing of restaurants of Type 47 licenses into de facto bars across the state. Including an overdue drastic increase in the numbers of investigators of these licensees to ascertain if they are violating the conditions of their licenses.
- Increase transparency and convene local stakeholder meetings of the public health and safety community – independent of license holders.
- Provide ready public access to find and monitor conditions (including any imposed by ABC or any local agencies) on licenses including posting at the license site.

California public health and safety advocates are committed to working with the ABC and being more actively engaged in their practices going forward. Ten thousand lives are lost annually in the state from alcohol-related causes with total costs estimated at \$22 billion.

The number of places serving alcohol has gone up significantly over the last decades (outlets nearly quadrupled in last 40 years while population hasn't even doubled). According to ABC annual reports, the number of licensees in CA has increased from 24,641 in 1974 (pop 21,170,000) to 87,112 in 2014 (population 38,800,000).

Nationally, nearly 88,000 people die from alcohol-related causes each year, making it the third leading preventable cause of death in the United States. In addition, alcohol is involved in approximately 40 percent of all violent crimes committed in the U.S. [<https://ncadd.org/about-addiction/alcohol-drugs-and-crime>] and problems related to the excessive use of alcohol cost the US \$249 billion in 2010, according to the CDC. [<http://www.cdc.gov/features/costsofdrinking/index.html>]

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Public health and safety participants in the meeting included:

San Diego County

Karen Lenyoun
Eric Collins

[North City Prevention Coalition](#); [SAY San Diego](#)
[Binge and Underage Drinking Initiative of San Diego County](#);
Alcohol Policy Panel of San Diego County; [Institute for Public Strategies](#)

SF Bay Area

Thania Balcorta
Bruce Lee Livingston
Michael Scippa

[Eden Youth and Family](#); Co-Chair of CAPA
[Alcohol Justice](#)
Alcohol Justice

Central Valley

Jim Kooler
Lynne Goodwin

[Friday Night Live](#)
Friday Night Live

Los Angeles County

Sara Cooley
Ruben Rodriguez

California Alcohol Policy Alliance; Alcohol Justice
[Pueblo y Salud](#); [Los Angeles Drug and Alcohol Policy Alliance](#)

Sacramento

Rev. Jim Butler

[California Council on Alcohol Problems](#)

For more information, please contact:

Michael Scippa, Director of Public Affairs, Alcohol Justice, (415) 257-2490

Jeffrey Tufenkian, Senior Media Advocacy Strategist, Institute for Public Strategies (619) 476-9100 x105

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