

OMBA

For Immediate Release

Beer Advocates Urge ABLE Commission to Uphold, Enforce Quality Control Standards

Oklahoma City, OK, February 14, 2008 – A coalition of national and state beer advocates, led by the Beer Institute and the Oklahoma Malt Beverage Association (OMBA), have called on the Alcoholic Beverage Laws Enforcement Commission (ABLE) to uphold quality control standards ABLE is considering eliminating under pressure from certain strong beer wholesalers. The commission will meet Friday at 10:00 a.m. in Oklahoma City. The three standards – proper refrigeration of draught and package beer, regular rotation or removal of product by the wholesaler at the retail outlet and regular cleaning of tap lines – are authorized under current rules established by ABLE but the requirements are not being followed by certain strong beer wholesalers.

“What’s at issue is quality control of our product and disregard by some Oklahoma wholesalers to adhere to ABLE rules,” said Brett Robinson, OMBA president. “For thousands of Oklahoma business owners, large and small, quality control is a mainstay of their success and ability to earn a living. The beer industry is no different, however some strong beer wholesalers don’t see it that way. When consumers purchase beer, they should receive the best tasting, freshest product available, a product that has been properly refrigerated, rotated and, if ordered on tap, served through clean tap lines. Unfortunately, certain Oklahoma strong beer wholesalers do not want to comply with these basic quality control standards and would rather use their substantial resources and powerful influence to abolish these important requirements.”

“The quality control regulations at issue are clearly a proper subject for regulation by the ABLE Commission,” said Arthur J. DeCelle, executive vice-president of The Beer Institute in Washington, D.C. “The commission has broad authority to supervise and regulate virtually every phase of the business of manufacturing, transporting, storing and distributing all alcoholic beverages including strong beer, which certainly includes the quality control standards now in place.”

Robinson said scientific and technical information that substantiates the need to maintain fresh inventory is widely known among all Oklahoma beer distributors.

“Our beer distributors know that beer is perishable and, like most other food and beverage products, has a limited life span which can, however be extended by proper refrigeration, rotation and clean tap lines. The OMBA calls on the ABLE Commission to

retain and enforce current regulations which cover the following universally-accepted industry quality control measures.”

- Refrigeration requirements for draught and package products while at wholesalers’ warehouse facilities and while in transit in the wholesalers’ possession. Heat, sunlight and time are beer’s principal enemies, degrading quality and taste.
- A prescribed process for product rotation and exchange in the case of out-of-code or close-to-out-of-code products.
- A specific regimen (typically every two weeks) and prescribed process for line and tap cleaning. Tap lines can cause an off taste if not properly maintained.

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The Oklahoma Malt Beverage Association was founded in 1938 as an advocacy association for Oklahoma beer distributors. OMBA safeguards the business interests of beer distributors collectively and individually and works to improve the business climate in which they conduct their daily operations