



## Alcohol Advisory Council (AAC) Meeting

Wednesday, August 27, 2025, 1:30pm

This meeting was held in a hybrid environment

### Meeting Minutes

#### ALCOHOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Pete Holmes, WSLCB Board Member  
Will Lukela, WSLCB Director  
Andrea McNeely, Assoc of WA Spirit & Wine Distributors  
Jeff Gombosky on behalf of G. Canizales, Beer Institute  
Paul Beveridge, Family Wineries of Washington State  
Scott Hazlegrove, WA Beer & Wine Wholesalers Assoc  
Daniel Olson, WA Brewers Guild  
Mhairi Voelsgen, WA Distillers Guild  
Carolyn Logue, WA Food Industry Association  
Sean DeWitz, WA Hospitality Association  
Brad Tower, WA Liquor Store Association  
Josh McDonald, WA Wine Institute  
Sally Jefferson, Wine Institute  
Rowland Thompson, Wine Institute

#### GUESTS

Jim Vollendroff, WSLCB Board Chair  
Ollie Garrett, WSLCB Board Member  
Becky Smith, Licensing & Regulation Director  
Larry Grant, Director of Enforcement & Education  
Justin Nordhorn, Policy and External Affairs Director  
Marc Webster, Director of Legislative Relations  
Sarah Okey, PhD Research Program Manager  
Kristen Haley, Public Health Education Liaison

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#### Welcome

Board Member Holmes welcomed everyone to the relaunch of the Alcohol Advisory Council and introduced Board Chair Vollendroff and Board Member Garrett. Vollendroff and Garrett welcomed everyone and thanked them for participating in the Council.

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#### Introductions

The AAC members, staff and guests introduced themselves and provided their names and affiliations.

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#### Licensing Update

Director Smith spoke about the new Licensing Education, Enforcement and Administrative Data System (LEEADS) implementation that has created issues for both employees and customers, but they are being addressed and ultimately there will be a better and more efficient system with reduced processing times. She asked for patience and encouraged people to reach out with any questions.

Regarding House Bill (HB) 1515, the Licensing team is dedicated to ensuring smooth implementation of the new rules and will launch a training course to assist with the questions around the process.

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### **Enforcement & Education Update**

Director Grant discussed the implementation of HB 1515 and noted that the division's focus is on education and compliance to support licensees before enforcement actions. The Compliance team has expanded from four to eight officers to answer questions, help with training and provide licensees with resources, and recruitment to fill vacancies in the Enforcement team is ongoing. There has been significant interest in the Responsible Liquor Sales (RLS) classes so more sessions may be added.

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### **Legislative Update**

Director Webster stated that there would be no agency-request legislation for the upcoming session. He mentioned that there are some data dashboards on the agency's website, but he and the Research team would be very interested in collaborating with the industry to acquire more data to inform policy decisions.

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### **Policy & Rules Update**

Director Nordhorn updated on activities of the Rules team which include implementing HB 1515, working with the industry on product placement, acceptable forms of ID, seasonal hours for beer and wine licensees, and contract kitchens.

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### **Research Update**

Dr. Okey introduced the Research Program which was developed to extend the agency's commitment to data-informed decision making and works to be a nonpartisan and transparent resource focused on public health and safety outcomes related to policy, products and regulation of alcohol, cannabis, tobacco and vapor. Data is available on various alcohol-related topics on the website, including dashboards for liquor sales revenue and youth access compliance checks.

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### **Public Health**

Kristen Haley spoke about her position as the Public Health Education Liaison and noted that her responsibilities include to advise and consult with agency partners in prevention and public health, to convene partners and stakeholders for meaningful discussions around policy, and to liaison between public health and prevention and the Liquor and Cannabis Board.

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## **Director's Comments**

Director Lukela noted that agency staff has been very busy and thanked everyone for their patience and understanding during the implementation of the new database (LEEADS). He expressed appreciation for everyone's participation in the Alcohol Advisory Council, and he looks forward to everyone's input.

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## **Roundtable Discussion – AAC Members**

Jeff Gombosky stated that there are currently no issues to report, and that he appreciates the LCB having the AAC and listening to stakeholders.

Paul Beveridge said it's great to be back, but the wine industry is in the biggest slump in 50 years, with wineries closing on a daily basis. One thing that could help is if LCB would track the number of wineries that go out of business. Another help would be to simplify the fee structure and reduce the fees.

Mhairi Voelsgen echoed that it is tough times for the industry, with all levels being impacted.

Scott Hazelgrove agreed that times are tough and added that the public perception of alcohol consumption and actual consumption numbers don't match. Having accurate data available would help with that perception. Regarding product displays, he congratulated the agency because the issue is a challenge for the industry and public health.

Daniel Olson agreed that it is a tough landscape for his industry, and they are seeing more brewery closures than openings.

Carolyn Logue noted that the grocery stores are also struggling, and she would like to see some engagement on liquor fees.

Sean DeWitz shares the same concerns as those previously mentioned but added that LCB staff is consistently very responsive when contacted. The hospitality industry is also facing tough times, and he looks forward to partnering with LCB in the future for rules that make sense.

Brad Tower has always appreciated the staff members that he's worked with. He's looking forward to the product placement draft rules. He's eager to help with enforcement because online sales hurt the industry. He shares a concern with the retail industry, in that they collect and remit substantial tax revenue for the state, but liquor sales are more burdened than other retail products and then pay a large amount of credit card processing fees on the money they remit to the state.

Sally Jefferson stated that it's a difficult, challenging time for all producers. They appreciate the process surrounding the product placement rules and look forward to other opportunities to weigh in on the proposal.

Rowland Thompson noted that a decline in wine consumption is really affecting the industry, and any assistance from LCB would be appreciated. He said changes need to happen, and hopefully the wine industry can adapt.

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### **Closing, Next Meeting and Adjourn**

Member Holmes thanked everyone for the rich and robust discussion and adjourned the meeting at 3:25 pm.

Minutes approved this 23rd day of September 2025



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Jim Vollendroff  
Board Chair

Not Present

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Ollie Garrett  
Board Member



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Peter Holmes  
Board Member

Minutes Prepared by: Deborah Soper, Administrative Assistant to the Board

<b>LCB Mission</b> - Promote public safety, public health, and trust through fair administration, education, and enforcement of liquor, cannabis, tobacco, and vapor laws.
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