



# **RHODE ISLAND LIQUOR OPERATORS COLLABORATIVE**

**REPRESENTING RHODE ISLAND'S INDEPENDENT LIQUOR RETAILERS**

## **H6270 - OPPOSE**

15 May 2025

Dear Chairman Solomon and Committee Members:

The Rhode Island Liquor Operators Collaborative opposes House Bill 6270.

With a focus on public safety, Rep. Baginski, submitted H6056, which would narrow the scope of Hemp-derived THC Beverages to Rhode Island's on- and off-premise alcohol retailers. Beverage alcohol retailers, who already specialize in selling intoxicating age-restricted products, are perfectly set up and equipped to ensure that these hemp-derived THC products get to the public in the safest manner possible. They are already trained to detect the effects of intoxicating substances when interacting with consumers and are specialists in regulating when and when not to serve clients. A number of Class A retailers have hopped on board the trend and have found success in selling these regulated products.

House Bill 6270 would outright ban this emerging category, which should be viewed as a stepping stone for consumers wishing to experience the effects of THC in a small-dose, familiar canned vessel, which is overwhelmingly deemphasized in dispensaries.

Developing a proper regulatory framework for Hemp-derived THC Beverages has been at the forefront of many discussions within American Beverage Licensees (ABL), RILOC's national trade association for which I serve as Vice President. We represent on- and off-premise adult beverage retailers in 25+ states; in every state where these beverages are regulated properly, they are safe for the public to consume and present a massive financial upside to the state when it comes to excise and sales tax collection. This winter, ABL released a policy memo outlining principles that should be used when regulating this new category. Rep. Baginski's bill addresses the majority of concerns as outlined in the memo, especially when it comes to public safety and enforcement. Eliminating this burgeoning category would be a massive mistake and a step in the wrong direction.

Sean Hughes, Account Director for the Connecticut Package Stores Association, commented, "During the 2023 legislative session, [Connecticut] lawmakers passed a bill that defined hemp-based THC, age-restricted its sale and broke products into categories based on potency. Package stores would be allowed to sell hemp-based THC seltzers to adults aged 21 and over if they contained 5 mg or less of THC per container." He continued that in the 2024 session, "[Connecticut] legislators decided to restrict hemp-based THC beverage sales to both cannabis dispensaries and package stores, where the monitoring of age-restricted products is top priority."

We further maintain that Rep. Baginski's bill, H6056, is the correct solution to the current emerging problem in the Hemp-derived THC category; availability of intoxicating substances in an environment that is not age-restricted. We are open to and know Rep. Baginski is amending her bill to contain content involving taxation, testing and labeling requirements as seen fit by the Office of Cannabis Regulation, the Cannabis Control Commission, the Department of Health and the Division of Taxation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nicholas A. Fede, Jr." in a cursive script.

Nicholas A. Fede, Jr.  
Executive Director