



# 2025 Northern / Southern Regional Conference



Hyatt Regency Buffalo Hotel & Conference Center

Two Fountain Plaza, Buffalo, New York 14202

September 14-16, 2025

*Over a Barrel: Riding the Rapids of Alcohol Regulation, Honoring the  
Empire State's Spirit and History of Innovation*

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## BUSINESS AGENDA

### 1<sup>st</sup> DAY – SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2025

2:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M.	<b>MAID OF THE MIST TOUR, NIAGARA FALLS</b> – <i>Optional</i>
6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.	<b>REGISTRATION &amp; INFORMATION DESK</b> – <i>Coatroom</i>
6:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M.	<b>WELCOME RECEPTION</b> – <i>Atrium</i>
8:00 P.M. – 12:00 A.M.	<b>HOSPITALITY SUITE</b> – <i>VIP Suite</i>

### 2<sup>nd</sup> DAY – MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2025

7:30 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.	<b>REGISTRATION &amp; INFORMATION DESK</b> – <i>Coatroom</i>
8:00 A.M. – 8:55 A.M.	<b>BREAKFAST</b> – <i>Grand Ballroom A</i>
9:00 A.M. – 9:15 A.M.	<b>OPENING CEREMONIES / PRESENTATION OF COLORS / WELCOME</b>
9:15 A.M. – 10:15 A.M.	<b>ROLL CALL:</b> Jenna Ayala, NCSLA Executive Director
10:15 A.M. – 10:30 A.M.	<b>MORNING BREAK</b> – <i>Grand Ballroom Prefunction</i>
10:30 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.	<b>PANEL #1: Navigating Tariffs: Adapting to Rising Costs in the Alcohol Industry</b> Recent and fluctuating tariffs on America's trading partners, particularly those imposed on Mexico and Canada, could create significant financial pressures for the alcohol industry, forcing businesses to adapt in various ways. Small alcohol producers are facing rising costs for aluminum cans and essential ingredients, while restaurants and bars are seeing increased prices for alcohol and other supplies that are imported. As businesses navigate these challenges, critical questions arise: How will they adapt to these rising costs? How will consumer behavior shift in response? And what long-term impacts will these responses have on the industry?
<b>Moderator:</b>	SARAH BRADLEY, <i>General Counsel, North America, Campari America, LLC</i>
<b>Panelists:</b>	DARSHAK DHOLAKIA, <i>Partner, McDermott Will &amp; Emery</i> ROB MARON, <i>Senior Vice President, International Trade Policy and Market Access, Distilled Spirits Counsel of the United States</i> KARL STORCHMANN, <i>Clinical Professor of Economics, New York University</i>



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11:40 A.M. – 12:40 P.M.

**PANEL #2: New York and Its Neighbors: An Historical Perspective on Alcohol Trafficking from Prohibition to Today**

Due to its proximity to Canada, Buffalo's storied waterfront emerged as an alcohol smuggling hub during Prohibition, resulting in a thriving underground, cross-border bootlegging infrastructure likely closely tracking Atlantic City and other neighboring jurisdictions. The response that followed was an end to Prohibition marked by the strictures of alcohol regulatory regimes emerging through complex statutory controls as seen in New York's Alcoholic Beverage Control Law. Panelists will explore that evolution, from prohibition through to today. In addition, assorted efforts aimed at modernizing liquor laws to meet current and evolving business models, creating a more symbiotic relationship between licensees and alcohol regulators will be addressed.

**Moderator:**

MARTIN P. MEHLER, *Senior Partner*, Mehler & Buscemi

**Panelists:**

KRISTIN KRUEGER, *Interim Director*, New Jersey Department

JEREMY LOCKE, *Deputy Chief Operating Officer*, The Alcohol & Gaming Commission of Ontario

MARC SORINI, *General Counsel*, Brewers Association

12:45 P.M. – 1:45 P.M.

**LUNCH – Grand Ballroom A**

2:00 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

**PANEL #3: Pouring with a Purpose: Compliance in Alcohol-Focused Donations and Scholarships**

As beer, wine and spirits brands grow in size and popularity, their desire to give back to the community supporting them grows too. State and federal regulations significantly impact the possibility, manner and practicality of alcohol focused companies from engaging in such activity. This panel will discuss the rules, pitfalls and potential legislative alternatives.

**Moderator:**

ROB PINSON, *Partner & Alcohol & Trade Hospitality Team Leader*, Adams & Reece

**Panelists:**

MISSY P. WELCH, ESQ., *Director of Programming*, North Carolina Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission

RYAN MALKIN, *Principal Attorney*, Malkin Law P.A.

3:00 P.M. – 3:15 P.M.

**AFTERNOON BREAK – Grand Ballroom Prefunction**

3:15 P.M. – 4:15 P.M.

**PANEL #4: Beyond the Bottle Bill – Assessing Public Policy Options to Reduce Environmental Impact of the Alcoholic Beverage Industry**

Several states are considering policies to mitigate the environmental impact of consumer waste and plastics pollution by moving beyond traditional "product stewardship"



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approaches to waste management and sustainability such as the New York “Bottle Bill” and the deposit/returns system established thereby. While New York considers how - or whether - to expand applicability of the “Bottle Bill” to wine and liquor bottles, states such as Hawaii and California are increasingly seeking to transfer some portion of the costs of managing the waste generated by the sale of consumer goods including alcoholic beverage containers to the entities that actually produce those goods via “Extended Producer Responsibility” or “EPR” policies. While many states - including New York - currently have “EPR” type statutes in place for consumer goods such as electronics and rechargeable batteries, states including Hawaii (via Hawaii bill H.B. 1264), are considering whether or not to extend their “EPR” policies to consumer waste including beverage containers – thereby seeking to relieve their taxpayers of some of the costs associated with the environmental cleanup arising from consumer waste consisting at least in part of discarded alcoholic beverage containers. The panel will examine various public policy approaches to sustainability and waste management that states can adopt to address the growing health, safety, environmental, and social impacts of consumer product waste and plastic pollution, including potential implications for the alcoholic beverage industry.

**Moderator:** STEVE GROSS, *Vice President, State Relations*, Wine Institute

**Panelists:** PAUL GAGLIARDI, *Owner*, Flair Beverages Corp  
PAUL PISANO, *Senior Vice President, Industry Affairs and General Counsel*, National Beer Wholesalers Association

6:30 P.M. – 9:00 P.M. **PRESIDENT’S BANQUET DINNER & TASTING BY TASTENY** – Grand Ballroom DEFG

9:00 P.M. – 12:00 A.M. **HOSPITALITY SUITE** - VIP Suite

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Day – TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2025**

8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M. **REGISTRATION & INFORMATION DEK** – Coatroom

8:00 A.M. – 8:55 A.M. **BREAKFAST** – Grand Ballroom A

9:00 A.M. – 10:00 A.M. **PANEL #5: Keeping it Local: Small Businesses Work to Remain Compliant and Thriving**  
Small businesses in the alcoholic beverage arena are birthed by brave and innovative visionaries with a dream and a plan. The hard work of achieving success, particularly in this highly regulated, three-tiered system, is not for the faint of heart. This panel explores some of the challenges faced and success stories, as well as changes sought. The experiences of various NYS alcoholic beverage related businesses will be shared, including the impact felt surrounding legal challenges to self-distribution and new legislative initiatives that may offer some relief.



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**Moderator:** NEW YORK STATE LIQUOR AUTHORITY

**Panelists:** SANDRA JACQUES, *President*, New York State Latino Restaurant, Bar and Lounge Association  
Taste New York, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets  
MICHAEL CORRERA, *Executive Director*, Metropolitan Package Store Association, Inc.

10:10 A.M. – 11:10 A.M.

**PANEL #6: Custom Crush vs. Alternating Proprietorship: Who's In Charge Here?**

This panel will explore the differences between an alternating proprietorship and custom crush (contract manufacturing). It is possible to have different entities share the same premises and to manufacture for another party. Each arrangement is governed by its own rules, creates different obligations and leads to different consequences. It all begins with the threshold question, "Who is making the product?" The panel will discuss TTB and state considerations and rules governing alternating proprietorships and custom crush arrangements, proper COLA applicants, the transfer and storage of product, tax implications, and record keeping responsibilities.

**Moderator:**

**Panelists:** SHAUNA BARNES, *Founding Partner*, Barnes Beverage Group  
CURTIS R. HARRINGTON II, *Founding Partner*, Belcher Sykes Harrington, PLLC  
MAGGIE WOODS, *Malt Beverage Administrator*, Kentucky Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control

11:15 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.

**MORNING BREAK – Grand Ballroom Prefunction**

11:30 A.M. – 12:30 P.M.

**PANEL #7: Alcohol Jeopardy**

**Co-Hosts:** PHILLIP SANCHEZ, *Director*, New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department Alcoholic Beverage Control Division

12:30 P.M. – 1:30 P.M.

**LUNCH – Grand Ballroom A**

1:45 P.M. – 2:45 P.M.

**PANEL #8: Bridging Policy and Practice: Educating vs. Lobbying vs. Lawyering**

State alcohol regulators and their staff often serve as essential educators to both governors and legislators, helping ensure that policy decisions are informed by real-world regulatory experience, legal mandates, and public interest considerations. Lobbyists and alcohol industry attorneys also play a vital role in advocating for the needs and goals of their clients.



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How can stakeholders effectively communicate the complexities of alcohol laws, their impacts, and enforcement requirements to policymakers who may be unfamiliar with the intricacies of the regulatory system, industry trends, or longstanding statutory provisions?

This panel will explore the unique and distinct roles various stakeholders play in educating, shaping, and informing policy—whether through testifying before legislative committees, providing data-driven analysis on regulatory trends, assessing the feasibility and impact of proposed laws, or offering technical assistance in drafting legislation. Panelists will also examine how engaged policymakers stay informed about evolving industry practices, court rulings, and federal developments that may require adjustments to state laws and regulations.

The discussion will also address the challenge of explaining outdated laws that no longer serve their intended purpose while defending longstanding regulations that continue to provide important public protections.

This session will provide valuable insights into the intersection of law, policy, and politics.

**Moderator:** TRAVIS HILL, *Counsel*, Hunton Andrews Kurth, LLP

**Panelists:** THOMAS AKRAS, *Director of Legal and Legislative Division*, Maryland ATCC  
RODRIGO DIAZ, *Executive Director*, Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board  
WENDY KNIGHT, *Commissioner*, Vermont Department of Liquor and Lottery

2:45 P.M. – 3:00 P.M.

### **AFTERNOON BREAK – Grand Ballroom Prefunction**

3:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

### **PANEL #9: The Logistics of DTC: Fulfillment Houses & Shipping Legally**

Fulfillment houses are third-party logistics providers that store, package, and ship alcoholic beverages on behalf of manufacturers and retailers. Their role has expanded with the rise of direct-to-consumer (DTC) shipping, helping producers reach customers across state lines. However, alcohol regulation varies widely by state due to the 21st Amendment, leading to different rules for fulfillment houses. Some states require licenses and impose reporting requirements, while others prohibit their use entirely. Major manufacturing states like New York and California lack specific laws addressing them, relying instead on general warehousing and transportation statutes.

This patchwork of regulations raises questions about enforcement and compliance, particularly as fulfillment houses do not fit neatly into the traditional three-tier system. Some regulators worry they may facilitate DTC shipping in ways that circumvent state laws. Unlike traditional warehouses, fulfillment houses focus on rapid order processing rather than long-term storage, making tracking shipments and ensuring tax compliance



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more complex.

As DTC sales grow, policymakers must determine how fulfillment houses fit within the regulatory framework. This panel will explore the proliferation of these logistics hubs as well as the challenges of balancing enforcement with market realities, ensuring consumer access while maintaining oversight to prevent unauthorized sales, and protecting state control over alcohol distribution.

**Moderator:** RUSSELL THOMAS, *Executive Director*, Tennessee Alcoholic Beverage Commission

**Panelists:** ALEX KORAL, *Regulatory General Counsel*, ShipCompliant by Sovos  
ELAINA PARINA, *Vice President, Regulatory Affairs*, Constellation  
DUSTIN PICKENS, *Lead Counsel, Regulatory Affairs*, FedEx

4:00 P.M.

**CONFERENCE CONCLUDES**

***WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO EXPLORE BUFFALO (Dinner On Your Own)***

8:00 P.M. – 12:00 A.M.

***HOSPITALITY SUITE - VIP Suite***

***Safe travels home!***

### UPCOMING CONFERENCES:

**2026 ANNUAL CONFERENCE: JUNE 14-17, 2026, NEW ORLEANS, LA**

**2026 N/S REGIONAL CONFERENCE: LITTLE ROCK, AR**