

American Council on Alcohol Problems

Resolution on Underage Alcohol Use and the Sale of Alcopops in the state of North Carolina

In the matter of the examination of problems related to underage alcohol use and the products known as flavored malt beverages or alcopops.

Whereas, flavored malt beverages or alcopops are products known as starter drinks, created for and purposely marketed to young people across the U.S.; and...

Whereas, alcopops are sweet, fruity or soda pop flavored malt beverages that are particularly popular among 14-18-year-old girls; and...

Whereas, the American Medical Association found through nationwide polls released in December 2004 that approximately one-third of teen girls have tried alcopops, and one out of six has done so in the past six months; and...

Whereas, 2005 Monitoring the Future data shows that 75% of current eighth-grade drinkers had an alcopop in the past month, compared to 70% of tenth-grade drinkers, and 65% of twelfth-grade drinkers; and...

Whereas, underage drinking is widespread in North Carolina, with approximately 341,000 underage customers drinking each year and consuming on average at rates higher than those of adult drinkers; and...

Whereas, according to a CDC report, nearly 64 percent of North Carolina high school students reported having taken a drink of alcohol in 2009; 35 percent said they had been drinking at least once in the past 30 days; and more than 18 percent reported binge drinking during the same time period; and...

Whereas, underage drinking is a causal factor in a host of serious problems, including homicide, suicide, traumatic injury, drowning, burns, violent and property crime, high risk sex, fetal alcohol syndrome, alcohol poisoning and need for treatment for alcohol abuse and dependence; and...

Whereas, underage drinking cost the citizens of North Carolina \$1.5 billion in 2010 in medical care, work loss and suffering associated with alcohol-induced problems; and...

Whereas, young people who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcohol dependence and two and a half times more likely to become abusers of alcohol than those who begin drinking at age 21; and ...

Whereas, statutes in North Carolina define alcopops as distilled spirits but sell them as malt beverages; and...

Whereas, independent research indicates that awareness of alcohol advertising and marketing has an impact on the beliefs and expectations of children and youth regarding alcohol use; and...

Whereas, classifying alcopops as beer allows the alcohol industry to reach more young people through advertising practices on television, increasing their accessibility to young people; and...

Whereas, permitting the products to be classified as beer allows the alcohol industry to receive preferential regulatory treatment, including an enormous tax benefit – up to 12 times lower in some states; and...

Whereas, the 21st amendment gives states express authority over the regulation of alcoholic products—alcohol state law supersedes federal recommendations by the Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau or any other Federal agency; and...

Whereas, North Carolina has continued to sell alcopops as beer allowing the alcohol industry to continue to profit at the expense of America's children; and...

Whereas, Attorneys General in at least four States (California, Connecticut, Maine, and Virginia) have concluded that alcopop producers are violating State laws by marketing alcopops as beer; therefore,

Be It Resolved, the American Council on Alcohol Problems supports efforts to reverse improper tax classifications and sales practices of alcopops in North Carolina – classifications that jeopardize the health, safety and welfare of the state's youth and costs the state every year in lost tax revenue; and therefore...

Be It Finally Resolved, the American Council on Alcohol Problems contends these improper classifications of alcoholic beverages which allow the alcohol industry preferential regulatory treatment while placing the state's most precious resource – its children – at risk is an intolerable injustice that North Carolina should set right at the nearest opportunity via legislation such as proposed House Bill 782, the Fortified Malt Beverages Act.