MADISON ALCOHOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

To:	**City of Madison Common Council**	
	City of Madison Alcohol License Review Committee	
From:	**Madison Alcohol Advisory Council**	
Date:	**January 14, 2025**	
Subject:	**Opposition to Proposed City of Madison Ordinance Related to Geographic Limitations on "Class A" and Class "A" License Applications**	

As members of the alcohol beverage industry, we write to reiterate our opposition to the proposed ordinance (File #83669) to impose geographic limitations on "Class A" and Class "A" license applications.

While the goal of addressing excessive alcohol use and related issues is laudable, we do not believe blanket geographic limitations on alcohol beverage retailers to be an effective strategy. As a result, we respectfully urge the Alcohol License Review Committee and Common Council to reject this proposal.

First, by exempting large, institutional and chain grocery stores from the new license restrictions, the proposed ordinance discriminates against small, independent businesses, many of which are owned by persons of color and new residents to our community and country. We are unaware of any evidence that shows alcohol related disorder and crime is tied to the location of Class A licensed establishments, or a density of these licensees. Moreover, there certainly is no evidence indicating that small, neighborhood retail outlets are more problematic for the City than large, regional grocery stores.

Another consequence of eliminating small, neighborhood retail outlets is that it would likely diminish local foot and bicycle traffic while encouraging the use of motorized vehicles to travel to larger, regional grocery stores. As noted in the recent Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative Analysis, and public comments, this has the potential to increase drunk driving rates. Additionally,

by discouraging the development of small neighborhood retail stores, the problem of food deserts in the community is almost certain to be exacerbated.

Public support for the proposed policy also appears to be minimal. According to a University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute survey of opinions regarding alcohol use and related problems in the Greenbush-Vilas neighborhood, the majority of respondents felt that limiting alcohol outlet density would be ineffective[1]. Few people surveyed thought that extending the City's Alcohol Licensing Density Ordinance would be an effective method of limiting excessive drinking.

As you know, the City has experienced a significant rise in locally owned and operated breweries, wineries and distilleries in recent years. Unfortunately, the proposed ordinance has the potential to negatively impact these small craft producers as it would result in fewer small, neighborhood retail outlets who are more likely to sell locally produced alcohol beverages than the large grocery chains which are unaffected by the license limitations.

Lastly, it is important to recognize the proposed ordinance is unnecessary as the Alcohol License Review Committee and Common Council already hold the authority to reject, revoke, or refuse to renew alcohol licenses. Limiting the number of alcohol beverage retail licenses can currently be done on a license-by-license basis as each applicant comes before the ALRC and Council.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask the ALRC and Common Council to reject the proposed geographic limitations on "Class A" and Class "A" licenses in the City of Madison.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Madison Alcohol Advisory Council is a coalition of stakeholders that operate in the alcohol beverage industry and it includes the following organizations: Wisconsin Beer Distributors Association; Wisconsin Fuel & Retail Association; Tavern League of Wisconsin; Wisconsin Craft Beverage Coalition; Kwik Trip Inc.; Wisconsin Wine & Spirit Institute.

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[1] Feder, E., Moran, C., Gargano Ahmed, A., Lessem, S., Steidl, R., Limiting Retail Alcohol Outlets in the Greenbush-Vilas Neighborhood, Madison, Wisconsin: A Health Impact Assessment. University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, 2013.