



CONTACT: Michael Scippa 415-548-0492  
Jorge Castillo 213-840-3336

## **Big Bang for Booze Bucks**

### ***Alcohol Industry Spent \$3 Million in 2009 to Loosen Regulations and Defeat Billions in Taxes and Fees***

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (June 29, 2010) – Alcohol industry watchdog Marin Institute released a new report today that chronicles an enormous outlay of beer, wine, and spirits dollars to California legislators and the Governor's budget reform political action committee in 2009. The report suggests a "smoking gun" relationship between Governor Schwarzenegger's \$751 million alcohol tax proposal and its disappearance a few months later while his initiative PAC collected \$671,000 in alcohol industry donations.

The report, *A Lot of Bang for Booze Bucks: Big Alcohol's 2009 Lobbying in California*, documents more than \$3 million dollars funneled to key legislative committee members, the governor's "Budget Reform Now" political action committee and various lobbying efforts. Topping the list of political influencers were Anheuser-Busch InBev (\$417,968), Wine Institute (\$327,859), Diageo (\$320,697), and MillerCoors (\$190,000). Anheuser-Busch InBev, MillerCoors, and Diageo are all European-based global conglomerates.

*"While \$3 million may have been a smart investment for the alcohol industry in 2009, it resulted in tragedy for California youth, communities, and government agencies,"* noted report author, Sarah Mart, research and policy manager at Marin Institute.

The biggest recipients of Big Alcohol largess included Daryll Steinberg (D-Sacramento, \$84,700), Michael Villanes (R-Clovis, \$62,450), Alberto Torrico (D-Fremont, \$36,100), Curran Price (D-Los Angeles, \$35,700), Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa, \$32,620), Alex Padilla (D-Pacoima, \$31,620), Tom Harman (R-Huntington Beach, \$25,900), and Governor Schwarzenegger's "Budget Reform Now" PAC, which raked in \$671,000 in booze bucks.

Legislators who accepted contributions from Big Alcohol sponsored 41 bills to loosen alcohol regulation, ranging from alcohol advertising to agriculture, utilities, labor, and other regulations. The bills all created or extended competitive advantages for beer, wine, or spirits companies to improve profits and expand alcohol markets at the expense of taxpayers, the government, and public health.

The governor dropped his alcohol excise tax hike and legislators voted no or "walked" on a proposed "Charge for Harm" mitigation fee to help offset the \$8 billion that alcohol consumption costs state and local governments each year. With a multi-billion dollar state budget deficit and crippling cuts to essential social service programs, Big Alcohol's powerful influence left \$2.19 billion on the table.

*"We found Big Alcohol standing over the smoldering ruins of a failed state budget,"* said Bruce Lee Livingston, executive director of Marin Institute. *"With \$3 million in political influence and contributions, the alcohol industry defeated over \$2 billion in increased taxes and mitigation fees, while incessantly pushing deregulation."*

Marin Institute protects the public from Big Alcohol's negative practices and exposes the industry's harm in products, promotions and social influence, while organizing communities to protect themselves.

The report is available at [www.MarinInstitute.org](http://www.MarinInstitute.org).

###