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Drunk Driving Standards Need Toughening Says Alcohol Justice

National Transportation Safety Board Supports .05 Blood Alcohol Concentration or Lower to Save 800 to 1800 Lives in U.S. Annually

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (May 14, 2013) – Alcohol Justice joined the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) in calling for a reduction in the illegal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) per se limit from .08 to .05 or lower in the U.S. to save lives and prevent injuries. The NTSB recommended the tougher national standard at its board meeting today. The NTSB is an independent federal agency that promotes a higher level of safety in the country's transportation system.

"The U.S. is behind the times and behind the world in reducing the drunk driving threshold to .05 BAC or lower. Yet the data is solid with scores of rigorous studies indicating that at .05% everyone's driving skills are impaired," stated Bruce Lee Livingston, Executive Director/CEO of Alcohol Justice. *"Alcohol Justice hopes that it won't take long before Congress and all the states adopt what over 100 other countries world wide have done to prevent alcohol-related injuries and death."*

Countries with a .05 per se standard include Australia, Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, South Africa, Spain and many more. They have adopted lower illegal BAC limits for driving at the urging of leading medical, highway safety, and public health organizations. Several countries have adopted even lower illegal BAC levels. Japan, Poland, Norway, Russia and Sweden have set illegal BAC limits at .02 - .03.

Organizations supporting illegal BAC limits at .05 per se or lower include: World Medical Association, American Medical Association (AMA), British Medical Association, European Commission, European Transport Safety Council, World Health Organization (WHO), Canadian Medical Association, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, and the Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine. Studies show from 800 to 1800 lives could be saved annually with tougher standards, without a huge effect on law enforcement costs.

In the U.S. in 2011, 9,878 people were killed in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes, accounting for 31% of the total motor vehicle traffic fatalities in the U.S. Over 180,000 more were injured. Drunk driving crashes now cost America \$130 billion annually.

It has been 30 years since states began adopting the .08 BAC limit. By 1997, all states were enforcing .08 as the illegal limit for driving. Since then however, the percentage of fatal crashes involving impaired drivers has not improved. It is time for a new national campaign and new consensus to lower the illegal drunk driving threshold to .05 BAC or lower.

"Only by getting tougher on impaired driving will people think twice before getting behind the wheel after consuming two, three or four drinks" added Livingston. "We call upon Anheuser-Busch InBev and MillerCoors, which spend millions a year on "drink responsibly" campaigns, to support this tougher drunk driving standard."

For more information, please go to www.AlcoholJustice.org. For Bruce Lee Livingston's media availability, please contact Michael Scippa - 415 548-0492, or michaels@alcoholjustice.org.

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