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California Advocates Urge Lawmakers to Reject AB 342

Extending Alcohol Sales to 4 A.M. Puts Public Health and Safety at Risk

SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA (April 7, 2025) – [Alcohol Justice](#) reports that as California lawmakers consider [AB 342](#)—a bill that would extend alcohol sales in bars, restaurants, and clubs to 4 a.m.—public health advocates, community leaders, and concerned residents are urging the [Assembly Governmental Organization Committee](#) to vote NO on the dangerous proposal. Passing AB 342 would disrupt California’s longstanding and evidence-based 2 a.m. last call, exacerbating the state’s already alarming rates of alcohol-related harm, including drunk driving fatalities, assaults, and preventable deaths.

A Dangerous Precedent for California

AB 342 would allow cities like San Francisco to extend alcohol sales to 4 a.m., undermining the state’s uniform 2 a.m. last call—a policy that has protected communities for decades. This change would not only increase risks within San Francisco but also expose communities in surrounding counties, including Marin, Alameda, and Santa Clara, to heightened dangers. While alcohol sellers in San Francisco may see marginal economic benefits, the broader costs to public health, safety, and taxpayer resources would be devastating.

“This bill is a reckless attempt to prioritize alcohol industry profits over the well-being of Californians,” said Cruz Avila, Executive Director of Alcohol Justice. *“The data is clear: extending last call to 4 a.m. will lead to more drunk driving, more injuries, and more lives lost. California cannot afford to ignore the science or the human cost of this policy.”*

The High Cost of a 4 A.M. Last Call

A groundbreaking analysis by the [Alcohol Resource Group](#) and Alcohol Justice, titled [“The High Cost of the 4 A.M. Bar Bill.”](#) highlights the severe consequences of extending alcohol sales. The report confirms what public health experts have long warned: later last call times compromise public health and safety.

Key Facts

- **Increased Drunk Driving Fatalities:** Alcohol-related driving fatalities in California have already risen sharply, from 966 in 2019 to 1,370 in 2021 (California Office of Traffic Safety, 2023). Extending alcohol sales to 4 a.m. would put even more drunk drivers on the road during early morning commute hours, endangering countless lives.
- **Escalating Alcohol-Related Deaths:** Alcohol-related deaths in California have surged by 70% in just six years, from 10,800 annually in 2015 to 19,335 in 2021 (Esser et al., 2020; Jiménez, Demeter & Pinsker, 2023). AB 342 would worsen this crisis by enabling excessive drinking into the early morning hours.
- **Economic Burden:** Alcohol-related harm costs California an estimated \$35 billion annually. Extending last call would further strain public resources, requiring additional police, ambulance, and emergency services to address the fallout.

- **Harm to Neighboring Communities:** Analysis of the [Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System](#) shows that alcohol-related crashes are always more likely to be coming out of the urban centers targeted for late last calls. Crashes on 101 N were 58.2% more likely to be going from SF to Marin than Marin to SF; on 101 S, they were 20% more likely to be going into San Mateo County from SF on 101 S and 50% more likely to be going into San Mateo County from SF on 280 S. Similar patterns were seen around Oakland. ([Alcohol Justice, 2023](#))

Widespread Opposition to AB 342

Since 2013, there have been six attempts to pass similar legislation, and each time California has rejected it. The state wisely recognizes that extending alcohol sales is a dangerous policy change that prioritizes profit over people. AB 342 faces considerable opposition from communities across California, including lawmakers who understand the risks it poses.

"This bill is a disaster waiting to happen. Extending alcohol sales to 4 a.m. will only lead to more drunk driving, more accidents, and more tragedies on our roads", said California Assemblymember [Tom Lackey](#) (R-Palmdale), who was a CHP officer for 28 years. *"As someone who has seen the devastating consequences firsthand, any public policy that will undoubtedly result in tragedy and death deserves to be denounced.*

A Call to Action

Advocates are urging the Assembly Governmental Organization Committee to [TAKE ACTION](#) and stand with California families to reject AB 342, because extending alcohol sales to 4 a.m. is not a solution to any expressed need; it is a threat to the well-being of California communities.



"AB 342 is a slippery slope that would strip away the statewide protections of a 2 a.m. last call," said Raul Verdugo, Advocacy Director at Alcohol Justice. *"It disregards 40 years of peer-reviewed research and ignores the voices of Californians who value public health and safety over alcohol industry profits."*

About Us

Alcohol Justice is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1987 and dedicated to reducing alcohol-related harm through research, advocacy, and community engagement. By holding the alcohol industry accountable and promoting evidence-based policies, Alcohol Justice works to create healthier, safer communities. [Sign up to receive Alcohol Justice eNews and Action Alerts.](#)

Join the conversation: #ProtectCALastCall #VoteNoOnAB342 #PublicHealthOverProfits #STOP4AMBarBill.