



May 21, 2025

Allowing Wine & Spirit Retail Licensees to Own a Second Store

(S.7909 Skoufis / A.8547 Cunningham)

The Business Council of New York State, which represents over 3,500 businesses throughout New York, strongly supports this legislation that would make a simple update to the current New York State Alcoholic Beverage Control Law (ABC Law).

This memorandum is submitted in support of amending New York's Alcoholic Beverage Control Law which prohibits any person from owning or having an interest in more than **one retail liquor store** in the state. This legislation would allow owners to be licensed for 2 stores. The current statutory limitation is outdated, anti-competitive, and harmful to both consumers and the growth of responsible small- and medium-sized businesses. New York is one of the only states in the country that maintains a strict one-store-per-person rule, a restriction that does not exist for any other type of business in the State. This modest update to the law would promote economic development, reduce prices, improve consumer access, and bring New York in line with the majority of other states.

Enacted in the post-Prohibition era, the law was intended to maintain close control over the distribution of alcohol and prevent any criminal interests from controlling an unfair number of licenses to gain illicit control over the alcohol distribution in the State. However, the retail landscape has dramatically evolved. The modern economy depends on scale, brand development, and fair competition; elements stifled by the current statutory framework.

Many responsible small business owners would like the opportunity to grow their business, but the one-store limitation stifles that growth. By permitting ownership of 2 locations, the state can reward good actors and allow family-owned businesses to thrive across regions. Recently, the Business Council conducted a survey of over 30 independent liquor stores around the State with more than half of those owners responding that they would like to pursue another store if the law would allow them. Removing this restriction would modernize New York's alcohol laws and remove artificial barriers to competition and allow businesses to grow while creating generational wealth for independent owners.

Allowing 2 licenses does not mean an automatic expansion of retail alcohol outlets. The State Liquor Authority (SLA) retains full power to license, inspect, and discipline all retail operations. Existing safeguards—such as background checks, residency requirements, and licensing standards will continue to ensure responsible conduct and licensure.

Allowing licensees to expand to a second store means more jobs, storefronts, and tax revenue. At a time when small business development and job creation are key policy priorities, this change would provide a meaningful economic boost.

Furthermore, as part of the 2022-2023 New York State Budget, language was passed into law creating the ABC Law Revision Commission. The Commission consisted of 21 members from each sector of New York's alcohol and beverage industry as well as representatives from state agencies. The Business Council was a member of the Commission and as part of the work conducted, allowing a person to own more than one liquor store was one of the numerous issues discussed and widely supported by the commission members. Thus, the proposal was approved by a vote of the members and included in the Commission's final report delivered to the Legislature and Governor in May 2023.

Since this issue is roundly supported by many sectors of the industry, and we believe that it provides additional help to business owners as well as benefits consumers, The Business Council of New York State strongly supports this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Zuber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Paul" being more prominent than the last name "Zuber".

Paul Zuber,

The Business Council of New York State