



STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

DIVISION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

STATE LIQUOR AUTHORITY

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**ALBANY LIQUOR STORE'S LICENSE SUSPENDED
SLA Board Orders Emergency Summary Suspension for Shelia's**

NEW YORK – (February 7, 2007) The New York State Liquor Authority (SLA) summarily suspended the license of Sushila and Sanjana Traders Inc. at 322 Delaware Avenue in Albany, doing business as Shelia's Liquors. The suspension was ordered by the Members of the State Liquor Authority, Chairman Daniel B. Boyle, Commissioner Lawrence J. Gedda, and Commissioner Noreen Healey at the Full Board meeting on Wednesday, February 7, 2007.

The SLA received complaints in January 2007 alleging the liquor store was, in addition to indiscriminately selling alcohol to minors, also providing delivery services for the underage sales. On January 24, 2007, an underage operation was conducted by the Albany Police Department, the Bethlehem Police Department and the State Liquor Authority. An 18 year old underage agent contacted Shelia's by phone, ordering two bottles of vodka for delivery in Delmar. The owner of Shelia's delivered the vodka to the agent at approximately 6:45 pm. The owner, who did not request ID or ask the agent his age, was arrested by the Bethlehem Police for Unlawfully Dealing with a Child.

Also on January 24, at approximately 8:00 pm, the underage agent, officers from the Albany Police Department, the Bethlehem Police Department and SLA enforcement personnel entered Shelia's undercover. The underage agent was able to purchase another bottle of alcohol without providing ID. While at the premise, officers also observed two females purchase four bottles of alcohol. The cashier, later identified as the licensee's spouse, sold the alcohol without requesting ID or asking the customers their age. The females were stopped after the purchase by the officers and SLA enforcement where it was determined they were both 18 years old. The cashier was arrested by Albany Police for Unlawfully Dealing with a Child.

“The outrageous behavior by Shelia's owner, where 3 illegal sales to minors are witnessed in under 2 hours, demonstrates complete contempt for the law,” said State Liquor Authority Chief Executive Officer, Joshua B. Toas. “The Members of the Liquor Authority sent a clear message today that this type of behavior will not be tolerated.”

The SLA charged the liquor store with three counts of selling alcohol to a person under the age of 21. The members of the Authority determined Sheila's Liquor posed an imminent threat to the public and voted unanimously to suspend the license. Effectively immediately, no alcohol can be sold at the premises.

"Today's suspension sends a transparent message to any licensed establishment that they will be held accountable if they choose to serve or sell liquor to anyone underage," said Albany Police Chief James W. Tuffey. "This success is a prime example of how cooperation between multiple agencies can work towards ensuring the safety of the public."

"We commend the SLA on their prompt and swift action in suspending Sheila's Liquor license," Bethlehem Police Chief Louis G. Corsi said. "The Bethlehem Police will continue to work with the SLA and investigate all complaints of illegal sales of alcoholic beverages to persons under the age of 21."

"I want to thank the Albany Police Department and the Bethlehem Police Department for working with us on this important investigation," said SLA CEO Toas. "Effective partnerships between the SLA and law enforcement agencies are critical in ensuring the safety of our communities."

The State Administrative Procedure Act authorizes a State agency to summarily suspend a license when the agency finds that public health, safety, or welfare imperatively requires emergency action. When the SLA summarily suspends a liquor license, it also serves upon the licensee a Notice of Pleading alleging one or more disciplinary violations. In invoking a summary suspension, the SLA has deemed the violation(s), considering each licensee's disciplinary history, to be sufficiently serious upon initial review to warrant an immediate suspension.

The SLA's decision to summarily suspend a license is not a final determination on the merits of the case. The licensee is entitled to an expedited hearing before an administrative law judge to address the alleged violation(s) that led to the suspension. An order of summary suspension remains in effect until such time as it is modified by the State Liquor Authority or a reviewing Court.

The State Liquor Authority regulates and controls the manufacture, sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages within the State. The Authority works with local law enforcement agencies and localities across the State to ensure compliance with the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law. In addition, the Authority issues and renews licenses and permits to manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers of alcoholic beverages.

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