



**STATE OF NEW YORK
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
DIVISION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL**

STATE LIQUOR AUTHORITY

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**IN REPLYING REFER TO
Albany**

MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

October 19, 2006

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**SLA TASK FORCE HOLDS OPENING MEETING
Initial Meeting Focuses on 500 Foot Rule, License Classes and Renewals**

New York – (October 19, 2006) – Members of the New York State Legislature, local government leaders, law enforcement officials, industry representatives and State Liquor Authority (SLA) personnel met to begin a comprehensive review of policies for licensing, restaurants, cabarets, and nightclubs. The Task Force was called to refine existing laws, regulations and policies to better balance the needs of the affected parties and ensure compliance with the law. Task force recommendations will be made to SLA Chairman Daniel Boyle by December 31, 2006.

The Task Force, chaired by SLA Commissioner Noreen Healey, is charged with analyzing the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Law and regulations pertaining to on-premises licensure. The Task Force is addressing licensing policies and will make recommendations for revisions to the on-premise application. In an effort to obtain a wide range of expertise, opinions and insight, Commissioner Healey appointed a diverse group of members from across the State. The Task Force includes members from the NYS Legislature, local government officials, community board members, legal experts, industry representatives, law enforcement officials, and nightclub, restaurant and bar owners.

“It was important for the SLA to listen to the members of the task force as they bring a variety of experience, insight, and perspectives to the table,” said State Liquor Authority Commissioner and Task Force Chair Noreen Healey.

Borough President Scott M. Stringer said, "I am pleased that the SLA is reviewing the standards of liquor licensure through a taskforce made up of many relevant stakeholders. Changes to the current laws and regulations are necessary to allow residents and licensees to co-exist in our communities. I look forward to a full discussion of these issues."

State Assemblywoman Deborah Glick said, "I am very pleased that Commissioner Healey has convened this Task Force. If the community has a sense that there is proper enforcement, they will have fewer problems with these licensees."

Robert Bookman, counsel for the New York Nightlife Association said, "The industry is thrilled to be included in this important discussion. We are pleased with the balance of opinions present, a balance that will foster the growth of the industry as well as to protect the interests of the communities."

Scott Wexler, Executive Director of the Empire State Restaurant and Tavern Association said, "The Task Force meeting was a wonderful, productive exchange of ideas of how to improve the licensing process. It really was a collaborative effort taking into account the diverse interests of industry, community and law enforcement."

Albany Chief of Police James Tuffy said, "Since Chairman Boyle has been with the SLA there has been a marked improvement in the response to problems we have had with licensees. We have been able to reach out to him and the issue gets taken care of."

A focus of the initial Task Force meeting was an analysis of the 500 Foot and 200 Foot Rules. Under the "200 Foot Rule" no full liquor license, meaning spirits, wine and beer, can be issued if an establishment is on the same street and within 200 feet of a school, church, synagogue or other place of worship. The rule also applies to liquor stores. There are two exceptions under the law; if the establishment existed prior to the enactment of the law or if the establishment was present prior to the school or place of worship. The 200 Foot Rule does not apply to what are referred to as on-premises wine licenses, which allow a business to sell beer or wine for consumption on the premises.

The "500 Foot Rule" prohibits the Authority from issuing a full liquor license for on-premises establishments when there are already three or more establishments with full liquor licensees within 500 feet. The law provides only two exceptions. Those establishments that were operating prior to the laws' enactment were grandfathered in. In addition, the Authority may also approve the application if, after consulting with the municipality or community board, it determines that granting the license would be in the public interest.

"Today's meeting was a great start in our effort to develop and implement a balanced set of recommendations over the next three months," said Commissioner Healey. "I am confident that the members of the Task Force, with their collective experience and knowledge, will develop comprehensive proposals to help us refine our application and regulatory policies."

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.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Elected Officials:

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New York State Senate
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Senator Serphin Maltese
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Senator Frank Padavan
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Senator Nick Spano
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Speaker of the Assembly Sheldon Silver
Paul Goldstein
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Assembly Member Deborah J. Glick
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