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Eight Challenges to Big Alcohol's Power in 2021

A Personal Invitation to Join Alcohol Justice

SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA (January 25, 2021) -- Big Alcohol is a term for the most powerful and profitable alcohol corporations of the world. Most Americans have little idea of the true size and scope of the global businesses behind the big brand names, let alone the way their practices endanger public health and safety.

According to the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), alcohol consumption annually causes 3 million deaths around the world. It is the most harmful drug to both drinkers and nondrinkers. Alcohol is the third leading cause of preventable death in the United States, accounting for an estimated 95,000 deaths annually. Nearly 5,000 people under age 21 die every year from injuries caused by drinking alcohol. Alcohol use is associated with physical and sexual assault, unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), violence, vandalism, crime, overdose, substance use disorder (SUD), and high-risk behavior.

Yet Big Alcohol global players like Anheuser-Busch InBev, Molson Coors, Diageo, Heineken, Kirin, Asahi, Pernod Ricard, Constellation Brands and Brown-Forman inflict more than \$249 billion dollars of alcohol-related harm annually in the U.S. with virtually no accountability for their actions. Alcohol producers and their well-financed trade associations and front groups including DISCUS, Wine Institute, Beer Institute, American Beverage Institute, and the National Restaurant Association use aggressive lobbying practices and questionable research to kill or roll back alcohol regulations, reduce taxes, proliferate youth-enticing marketing, and, of course, push a drug that hurts or kills many with immediate, chronic, and/or addictive results.

[Alcohol Justice](#) envisions healthy communities free of the alcohol industry's negative impact. Its mission is to promote evidence-based public health policies and organize campaigns with diverse communities and youth against the alcohol industry's harmful practices. *"But we cannot do it alone,"* stated Bruce Lee Livingston, Executive Director, CEO of Alcohol Justice. *"This is why you are needed: to mobilize and to limit the impact of Big Alcohol on the next generation. That's why we commit at this time to a new year of ongoing campaigns to reduce Big Alcohol's negative influence."*

In 2021 Alcohol Justice invites the public to join in challenging the power of global alcohol corporate titans in eight critical ways:

1) Tell your Senators, Representatives, and the Biden administration to stop subsidizing the alcohol industry by raising the federal alcohol excise tax and indexing it to the annual cost of living. This tax hasn't been raised since 1991. It's time to *Charge for Harm* by collecting billions of dollars of new revenue.

2) Tell your Governor and state legislature that COVID-19 alcohol deregulation should not become the new normal. COVID-19 alcohol deregulations are dangerous and place alcohol industry profits above public health and safety.

3) Tell the U.S. Treasury Department's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) and Congress to update the government health warning on alcoholic beverages and include a cancer warning statement: *WARNING: According to the Surgeon General, consumption of alcoholic beverages can cause cancer, including breast and colon cancers.*

4) Tell your state legislature to reduce the illegal blood alcohol content level from .08 to .05 BAC. This will not succeed unless we insist that law enforcement end biased policing in traffic stops and checkpoints. Enforcement against alcohol-impaired driving cannot be an excuse for stopping and arresting people of color. Most of the rest of the world has adopted this standard to prevent DUI deaths and injuries. It's time the U.S. does too -- **.05 SAVES LIVES.**

5) Tell the NFL, NBA, MLB, and all other professional and amateur sports associations worldwide to end alcohol branding, sponsorship, ads, and celebrity endorsements. Alcohol and sports are a toxic mix for athletes and young viewers alike, fueling injuries, violent behavior, and other alcohol-related harm.

6) Tell your state legislature to raise the state alcohol excise tax and index it to the annual cost of living. Alcohol lobbyists persuaded Congress to reduce the federal alcohol excise tax and have prevented state alcohol tax increases for generations, resulting in billions of dollars of lost revenue annually and a virtual state subsidization of alcohol-related harm.

7) Tell your social networks to ban all alcohol-related ads, tweets, and posts. Ineffective age-gating and voracious, profit-driven alcohol advertisers are drowning youth in seductive, harmful alcohol ads and other branded content.

8) Tell your local transit agencies and state legislatures to ban alcohol ads on public property. More exposure to alcohol ads influences youth to start drinking earlier, to drink more, and leads to more alcohol-related problems later in life.

Alcohol Justice is not against alcohol consumption, but we strongly oppose well-funded, deceptive marketing by the alcohol industry. It promotes harmful consumption, alcohol use at an early age, cheap products, and expanded bar and retail access.

"You can help hold Big Alcohol accountable by challenging its power in the eight ways outlined above," Livingston said. "Just as there are bans on tobacco ads and effective sales restrictions, there can be stronger controls on alcohol advertising and sales to reduce the enormous public health and safety harm, and the catastrophic costs of that harm."



Alcohol Justice invites you to join their renewed public effort to rein-in Big Alcohol. [Sign up to receive Alcohol Justice Action Alerts and eNews.](#) *That's a great first step.* Big Alcohol may have the power to advertise in every media, at every sporting event, and to every age, but the public does not have to sit back and take it. If possible, [make a tax-deductible contribution to Alcohol Justice.](#) *This too will help add strength in 2021. "Together, we can successfully challenge Big Alcohol and advocate for public health and safety over industry profits,"* added Livingston.

For more information on Alcohol Justice campaigns and projects: <https://alcoholjustice.org/>

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