



**For Immediate Release**

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## **ALCOHOL JUSTICE AND US ALCOHOL POLICY ALLIANCE URGE DC METRO LEADERS TO KEEP TRANSIT SYSTEM ALCOHOL-AD FREE**

### **DC Metro One of 18 Major US Transit Districts With a Current Ban on Alcohol Ads**

#### **Proposed policy change would shift burden of cost to taxpayers and expose countless young people to excessive alcohol advertising**

WASHINGTON, DC (NOVEMBER 17, 2015) – California-based [Alcohol Justice](#), and North Carolina-based [US Alcohol Policy Alliance](#), are asking the Board of Directors of the Washington Metro Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to keep placing positive public health & safety benefits over the questionable revenue gains that might be derived from allowing alcohol ads on the DC Metro.

*“There is clear and compelling evidence that alcohol advertising on municipal property encourages youth alcohol consumption, which leads to harm,”* stated Diane Riibe, Chair, US Alcohol Policy Alliance. *“According to the [World Health Organization’s 2014 Global Status Report](#), the more alcohol ads kids see, the more likely they are to drink, to start drinking at an earlier age, and to drink more.”*

Excessive alcohol consumption causes an estimated \$249 billion in economic harm annually in the United States with \$100 billion in direct cost to federal, state, and local governments. According to a recent [CDC report](#), Washington, DC had the highest cost per person of alcohol-related harm at \$1526, compared to an \$807 national average.

*“Alcohol ads on transit vehicles or other public property is unacceptable,”* said Bruce Lee Livingston, Executive Director / CEO at Alcohol Justice. *“Instead, transit agencies should demand that sign brokers bring in advertising that does not pose documented threats to the safety of children. Municipalities should protect youth by refusing to advertise harmful products such as alcohol.”*

WMATA provides free transportation to thousands of DC public and charter school students through their *Kids Ride Free on Rail* program. Selling alcohol advertising on the Metro system is effectively offering up youth as a captive audience to alcohol marketers.

Alcohol Justice's 2013 national report titled: [These Bus Ads Don't Stop for Children: Alcohol Advertising on Public Transit](#), states that *“it makes no sense for public transit agencies or cities to allow alcohol advertising that recoups less than 1% of their operating revenues while governments in the U.S. bear the burden of over \$90 billion in annual costs from alcohol-related harm. Less than 1% of total operating revenue is just not worth all of the added risk of youth exposure to ads and alcohol-related public costs.”*

Supporters of continuing the DC Metro alcohol ad ban are encouraged to **TAKE ACTION HERE**: to tell the WMATA Board to “Keep the Ban.” The Board will meet this Thursday, November 19, 2015, to vote on the issue. All comments submitted to the board for review on this issue must be received no later than noon EST on Wednesday, November 18, 2015.

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