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BIG ALCOHOL DRUNK WITH POWER

\$5 Million Spent in California in 2010 to Defeat Alcohol Mitigation Fees

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (October 5, 2011) – Industry watchdog Alcohol Justice, formerly Marin Institute, released a new report today that chronicles an obscene outlay of Big Alcohol dollars to California legislators in 2010.

The report, *Drunk with Power: Industry Kills Alcohol Mitigation Fees in California 2010*, documents more than \$5 million dollars spent to influence all levels of government last year. A majority of the alcohol industry spending went toward campaign donations; lobbying state and local lawmakers; and contributions to political action committees in support of state initiative Proposition 26.

“Big Alcohol’s \$5 million investment in 2010 was a really bad deal for California,” said Sarah Mart, director of research at Alcohol Justice and report co-author. *“The politicians and the alcohol industry gained, while California youth, communities and government agencies lost big as they struggled to pay for increasing alcohol-related harms with ever-decreasing resources.”*

The biggest recipients of alcohol funding included Daryll Steinberg, D-Sacramento (\$96,500), Sam Blakeslee, R-San Luis Obispo (\$60,600), Alex Padilla, D-Pacoima (\$53,645), Michael Villanes, R-Clovis (\$47,970), Kevin de Leon, D-Los Angeles (\$47,796), Isadore Hall, D-Los Angeles (\$47,672), Noreen Evans, D-Santa Rosa (\$42,177), Bill Emmerson, R-Hemet (\$39,200), Felipe Fuentes, D-Los Angeles (\$38,200), and Gloria Negrete McLeod, D-Chino (\$36,867).

The alcohol industry also spent more than \$1.3 million to lobby state government on at least 49 proposed bills in 2010. Alcohol lobbyists focused on issues such as alcohol taxes, fee programs, alcohol licenses, and inter-state wine shipping. The greatest single focus of Big Alcohol’s spending last year totaled more than \$2 million to pass state initiative Proposition 26, making it virtually impossible to establish any new alcohol mitigation fees.

The top alcohol lobbyist employers in California in 2010 included Diageo (\$220,061), Anheuser-Busch InBev (\$165,000), MillerCoors (\$165,000), Wine Institute (\$142,000), Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America (\$138,000), California Beer and Beverage Distributors (\$96,000), and the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (\$87,600).

“Our state government is operating under the influence of Big Alcohol political contributions and lobbying,” stated Bruce Lee Livingston, Executive Director/CEO of Alcohol Justice. *“Critical revenue for alcohol-related programs was denied, as alcohol impact fees were ultimately defeated by Prop 26. The industry passed several bills to increase access to alcohol, while policymakers failed to protect public health and safety. This is what happens when government accepts Big Alcohol bucks.”*

Drunk with Power also notes that only \$10,000 was reported being spent by the industry in San Francisco to defeat Supervisor John Avalos’ Charge for Harm fee, despite their major grassroots campaign that produced a veto by wine distributor Mayor Gavin Newsom after the Board of Supervisors passed the fee. *“We question whether there has been full disclosure of lobbying efforts by Platinum Consulting and Barbary Coast at the behest of the alcohol industry, and encourage them to rectify it immediately,”* added Livingston.

Read the entire report now at www.AlcoholJustice.org

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