



Alcopops Legislation Statement of Support

We, the undersigned, recommend reducing youth access to sweetened, soda-like alcoholic beverages known as “alcopops” by limiting their sale to liquor stores only.

Also known as flavored malt beverages, alcopops are sweet pre-mixed alcoholic beverages, in sharp contrast with bitter beers or dry wines. Examples include Joose, Mike’s Hard Lemonade, Smirnoff Ice, and wine coolers. Four Loko is also an alcopop, although it no longer contains caffeine. Although production begins with a malt brewing process, alcopops are later filtered, and sweetened flavorings are added, often including distilled spirits or wine products.

Because they are sweet and do not taste like alcohol, alcopops appeal to children who might not otherwise drink an alcoholic beverage. These drinks are branded with catchy names and packaged in bright colors and appealing designs, similar to sports and soft drinks. Some alcopops have an alcohol content as high as 12% -- higher than most beers.

A majority of teens aged 14-18 years old report having tried alcopops, in comparison with only a quarter of adults. Younger drinkers, aged 12-15, report an overwhelming preference for alcopops in comparison with other alcoholic beverages. The American Medical Association found that approximately one-third of teenaged girls and one-fifth of teenaged boys have tried alcopops. Drinking during adolescence can lead to a lifetime of alcohol problems. Two out of five adolescents who begin drinking before age 15 will become alcohol dependent in their lifetimes, and one in eight youth aged 18-20 years is already alcohol dependent.

Alcopops are sold alongside soda, juice, and milk, in convenience stores and delis. More than 7% of New York high school students who drink report purchasing or otherwise obtaining their alcohol from retail stores (e.g. delis, grocery stores, mini-marts, etc.). That’s an average of two students in every classroom. Moving alcopops to liquor stores will significantly reduce the number of opportunities for youth to purchase them.

California, Utah, Maine, and Nebraska have already reclassified alcopops as spirits, limiting sales to liquor stores. New York should join them by enacting a measure to reduce underage drinking.

To sign on, please print your information below, or email agrasso@health.nyc.gov.

Organization: _____

Contact name & email: _____