



September 1, 2009

Honorable Brian Joyce, State Senator
Honorable Steven Walsh, State Representative
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
State House
Boston, MA 02133

RE: HB 1113 (Walsh) - SUPPORT

Dear State Senator Joyce and State Representative Walsh:

On behalf of Marin Institute, I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 1113 (Walsh). Marin Institute is a respected alcohol industry watchdog and has served as a leading research and advocacy institution for over 21 years. We monitor and expose the alcohol industry's targeting of youth and minority communities, as well as the industry's adverse effect on the world community, the environment, and public health.

Marin Institute's work includes coordinating and supporting the efforts of various states to reduce underage drinking. Underage drinking is a critical public health and safety issue for young people, causing an estimated 5,000 deaths per year among youth under age 21 nationwide. Alcohol advertisements are used by Big Alcohol to entice underage youth to drink.

While alcohol advertising is not the only factor in underage drinking, numerous long-term federally funded research studies have found that it is a significant contributing factor. It undermines efforts by parents, teachers, law enforcement, clinicians, clergy, and others in the community to discourage underage drinking. In a 1999 report on alcoholic-beverage industry self-regulation, the FTC concluded that, "While many factors may influence an underage person's drinking decisions, including among other things parents, peers and the media, there is reason to believe that advertising also plays a role."

Therefore, a statewide ban of alcohol advertisements on government property would be a significant step in stemming the tide of underage drinking. Massachusetts would certainly be the first state in the nation to institute such a ban, and would be sending a strong message that public health and safety of Massachusetts' residents will not take a back seat to Big Alcohol's profits and interests.

Marin Institute commends the introduction of House Bill 1113, and encourages the members of the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight to vote for its passage.

Sincerely,

Bruce Lee Livingston, MPP
Executive Director