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Bills to Make Cocktails To-Go Permanent in Virginia Pass House & Senate with Overwhelming Support

HB 688 & SB 635 eliminate July expiration date for consumer- & business-friendly measure

Richmond, Va. – Today, the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) and The Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association (VRLTA) applauded the Virginia House and Senate for respectively passing HB 688 (Vote: 81-18) and SB 635 (Vote: 40-0), companion bills that would permanently allow cocktails to-go to be sold from bars, restaurants and distilleries in support of businesses and consumers.

Currently, cocktails to-go for takeout and delivery in Virginia are set to expire July 1, 2024.

“Local bars, restaurants and distilleries continue to face headwinds with inflation, supply chain disruptions and staffing shortages,” **said Andy Deloney, senior vice president and head of state public policy at DISCUS.** “Cocktails to-go offer a stable and important source of revenue for Virginia businesses while providing increased convenience for consumers. Making cocktails to-go permanent provides long-term stability for those in the hospitality sector and continues a convenience many adult consumers have come to enjoy over the last four years. We applaud the Virginia House and Senate for moving these measures forward.”

Since the beginning of the pandemic, 23 states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws to permanently allow cocktails to-go, and 9 others have enacted laws that allow cocktails to-go on a temporary basis. Numerous states are still considering cocktails to-go legislation.

“During the pandemic, cocktails to-go was a vital lifeline to help keep Virginia’s restaurateurs in business, and it has continued to be a highlight for both restaurant operators and our customers into the present,” **said Eric Terry, president and CEO of VRLTA.** “As the restaurant industry is confronted with rising costs on a number of fronts, tools like this will help ABC-licensed establishments maintain their businesses and teams. We are grateful to have worked with our legislative patrons and partners across the alcohol and food service industries to make this permanent.”

The distilled spirits industry is committed to responsibility and encourages moderation for adults who choose to drink alcohol. Cocktails to-go are intended for home consumption. Laws governing alcohol consumption must always be observed.

BACKGROUND:

States that signed legislation to make cocktails to-go permanent into law:

Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Georgia, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and the District of Columbia have all made COVID-era cocktails to-go measures permanent.

States that signed legislation to allow cocktails to-go on a temporary basis into law:

California (expires December 31, 2026), Colorado (expires July 1, 2025), Illinois (expires August 1, 2028), Massachusetts (expires April 1, 2024), Michigan (expires January 1, 2026), New Jersey (TBD), New York (expires April 9, 2025), Vermont (expires July 1, 2025) and Virginia (expires July 1, 2024) passed legislation to allow cocktails to-go on a temporary basis.

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The Virginia Restaurant Lodging and Travel Association is the unified voice of the restaurant, lodging, travel and hospitality suppliers associations. VRLTA creates value for members by promoting the legislative interests of the industry, networking, educational opportunities, and protecting free enterprise. For more information, visit www.vrlta.org or call 800-552-2225.

The [Distilled Spirits Council of the United States](#) is the leading voice and advocate for distilled spirits in the U.S.