



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

March 17, 2009

Hon. David A. Paterson
Governor, New York State
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

Manhattan Community Board Four is strongly opposed to your budget proposal that would allow grocery stores and other beer outlets to sell wine, a privilege that for years has been the exclusive right of vineyards, wine merchants, and liquor stores.

There are about 2,700 wine outlets state-wide; however, if the new bill passes, wine will be available in over 21,000 places. We are fearful that this change could cost thousands of jobs and devastate many small businesses in Chelsea, Hell's Kitchen, and across the state.

According to The Last Store on Main Street, a coalition of small businesses across the state, 65-80% of NY liquor store revenues are derived from wine sales. It estimates that the proposed change will force at least 1,000 of these small businesses to close their doors and cost over 4,000 community based jobs.

While we are mindful of the need for new supermarkets in neighborhoods that are currently underserved, supermarket industry spokespersons have *not* suggested that this change will provide the economic incentive for new stores, nor will it result in any new jobs. Additionally, many of the large supermarket chains that serve New York are headquartered out of state, unlike liquor stores, which are local, independent businesses.

According to the Business Alliance for Local Living Economics, as much as 68 cents of every dollar spent stays within the community when consumers purchase goods from local businesses. Profits from these local businesses are reinvested into the community whereas profits from large chains go back to a company's corporate headquarters, often far from the point of sale.

Additionally, the sale of wine in every store where beer is now available would give teenagers greater access to alcohol – resulting in a heightened risk of underage drinking and fatal drunk driving accidents. Wine has twice the alcohol content of beer.

According to Law Enforcement Against Drunk Driving, a coalition of law enforcement officials from across the state, independent liquor stores have greater control over sales and are forbidden to have anyone under age 18 sell wine or liquor in their stores. Grocers, however, are allowed to have teenagers *under* 18 years old sell alcohol and cannot easily manage the risk of sales to minors. In Florida, California, and Texas, where wine is sold in supermarkets, three times as many young people per 100,000 under age 21 die each year from alcohol related incidents as compared to New York.

Governor Paterson, we urge you to continue to protect our young people, support small businesses, and preserve New York jobs by withdrawing your proposal to legalize wine sales in supermarkets.

Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair
Manhattan Community Board 4

[signed 3/17/09]

Tony Juliano
Co-Chair
Small Business Taskforce

[signed 3/17/09]

John Owens
Co-Chair
Small Business Taskforce

cc: Assemblymember Richard N. Gottfried
State Senator Tom Duane
Manhattan Borough President Scott Stinger
Council Speaker Christine Quinn
Council Member Gale A. Brewer