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OML alerts municipalities of danger of retail stores losing ability to sell alcohol

Oklahoma City, OK – Recently the Oklahoma Municipal League (OML) alerted local governments that their convenience and grocery stores could be in jeopardy of losing the ability to sell alcohol under the new modernization laws. With an October 1st deadline looming before implementation of the act, approximately three thousand applicants have sought the updated licensing.

Under the new laws, all 3.2 beer retailers who want to sell any beer after October 1 are required to get an Interim Retail License from the ABLE commission and a Certificate of Compliance from their municipalities.

“The smooth transition to cold, full-strength beer is at risk of stumbling,” said Lisette Barnes, president of the Oklahoma Beer Alliance. “We have less than three months until beer modernization goes into effect and retailers have had a year and a half to prepare. Consumers will be expecting cold, full-strength beer on October 1, and any retailer waiting to apply for their licenses is risking their ability to meet consumer demand.”

According to Mike Fina, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Municipal League (OML), one of the most critical steps is that municipalities must be prepared to issue a Certificate of Compliance to retailers. A liquor store operating under a current license does not need a new Certificate of Compliance. This requirement only pertains to outlets, such as convenience, gas, and grocery stores, who are applying for a license.

“Once the municipality receives this request from a retailer, they must verify that the applicant is compliant with their applicable zoning, safety, fire, and health codes. If the applicant is not in compliance, the municipality should notify them. If the applicant is compliant, an approval letter should be provided,” Fina added.

Once the retailer receives its Certificate of Compliance, they are required to forward it to the ABLE commission for license approval, along with their other application materials.

“It is important to know that if these steps are not completed by October 1, those businesses will not be able to sell alcohol as is outlined in the new law. As a result, a lot of revenue will be lost for the retailer as well as sales tax revenue for the municipalities,” Fina said.

To assist municipalities with the required Certification of Compliance, OML has created a section in their website, which conveys needed information, along with sample response letters. To access this information, please go to <https://www.oml.org/alcoholcompliance>

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