



The Extra Mile

Advocating for evidence-based policies and practices to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms

Going the Distance: Citizens Rally to Oppose Liquor License

On Tuesday, July 16th, TFL Inc.'s new liquor license application for a Mega Saver convenience store and gas station at 7059 Dodge Street [faced stiff community opposition](#). Neighbors expressed concerns about adding alcohol sales to an already busy and dangerous intersection, the location's proximity to schools and churches, the corporation's extensive history of violating liquor laws, and shared that the business does not fit well in the area with the new Crossroads development and Omaha Public Library.

Project Extra Mile Policy & Research Coordinator Liene Topko provided background on the corporation's history of sale to minor violations. Among the 28 licenses owned by TFL Inc. in the Omaha metro area, the corporation has been cited 30 times for selling alcohol to minors since 2007. These violations occurred during alcohol compliance checks by local law enforcement. It was noted that these operations occur only 2-3 times per year, making it likely that the corporation has more violations during the rest of the year given its history.

Neighbors pointed out that a majority of the proponents in favor of issuing the license were staff or had another financial interest in the business. Susan Howard, a resident in the area called out the proximity to schools stating, "We are worried about easy access to liquor by so many young and impressionable students, as well as the increased danger of intoxication at an extremely busy intersection." Other opponents echoed her concerns of loitering, trash, general traffic & safety concerns, as well as the easy access to alcohol. Some asked the council to impose restrictions on the size of products that could be sold, to which TLF Inc. expressed its opposition.

After hearing from nearly 30 proponents and opponents, the City Council could not come to an agreement about what recommendation to send to the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission (LCC) – both motions to approve and deny failed. As a result, the city will not have representation at the LCC hearing but opponents can still participate in that hearing to share their concerns with the Commission.

When looking at new liquor license applications, the LCC must consider the following ten factors:

- Recommendation of the local governing body
- Existence of a citizens' protest
- Existing population and projected growth
- Nature of the neighborhood
- Existence of absence of other retail licenses within the neighborhood
- Traffic flow
- Adequacy of existing law enforcement

- Zoning restrictions
- Sanitation
- Public interest.

Citizens across the state of Nebraska can be involved in the liquor licensing process to help shape the availability of alcohol in their communities. If you are interested in learning more about this issue, please stop by our office or contact us at info@projectextramile.org.

2024 Special Legislative Session Update

Governor Jim Pillen called the Nebraska Legislature back in session on July 25th to address education funding and property tax relief. As a part of his suggested relief plan, the governor has called for increases on a variety of so-called “sin” taxes:

- Spirits – increase from \$3.75/gallon to \$14.50/gallon
- Cigarettes – increase from \$0.64/pack to \$1.64/pack
- Vaping – increase from a 10% tax to a 30% tax.

Unfortunately, the bill had approximately five times more opponents than it did supporters and it appears that the governor and his allies have compromised on a number of provisions, including the proposed increase on distilled spirits excise taxes. Reports indicate that [an emerging plan](#) would double instead of quadruple the spirits excise tax rate for larger distilleries while cutting taxes for smaller ones (distinctions between sizes of businesses have yet to be outlined). Missing in all of these proposals, however, has been an increase to beer and wine tax rates, defying common sense and demonstrating the power of those lobbies in Nebraska. Like spirits, tax rates on beer and wine have not been increased since 2003. Despite the cost of these products continuing to increase over the past two decades, the value of these tax rates have declined because excise taxes are based on volume and not the sales price.

Increasing the price of alcohol is one of the most effective ways to prevent and reduce excessive alcohol consumption and the associated harms according to numerous research bodies. We also have compelling data from states that have increased these taxes. Research has found that [doubling alcohol taxes would reduce alcohol-related mortality by an average of 35%, traffic crash deaths by 11%, sexually transmitted disease by 6%, violence by 2%, and crime by 1.4%](#). Additionally, fatal alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes decreased by 9.9 per month – a 26% reduction (Wagenaar, et al., 2015) and rates of STIs also decreased as follows: gonorrhea rates decreased by 21% and chlamydia rates decreased by 11% (Staras et al., 2014) following a 2009 alcohol tax increase in Illinois.

For more information regarding bills of interest during the special session, [click here](#).

Youth-requested Interim Study on Alcohol Scheduled for Aug. 17

The interim study hearing on alcohol pricing and taxation ([LR353](#)) has been scheduled for **Saturday, August 17th, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Metro Community College South Omaha Campus in Room CAM 120**. This hearing is an opportunity for both concerned citizens and the alcohol industry to weigh in on how alcohol taxes impact our state.

Our youth advocates have done the hard work of getting the resolution introduced and the hearing moved from Lincoln to Omaha. Now we need coalition members to back them up and share their stories regarding cheap alcohol and its negative impact. This hearing is **not considered lobbying** as the legislature is simply gathering information on the topic. If you are unable to attend the hearing in person, you may submit online comments (500-word limit) [through the online portal](#). Comments must be **submitted AND CONFIRMED prior to 8:00 a.m. CDT on Saturday, August 17th**. Be sure to select the option to include your comments in the public hearing record prior to submission.

After submitting your comments, you must confirm your submission through an email you will receive by clicking on the link in the e-mail.

Coalition Member Spotlight - Christie Abdul-Greene

Christie Abdul-Greene has served as the Executive Director of Keep Omaha Beautiful since 2022. Originally from rural Nebraska, she has lived in Omaha for over 25 years. Christie holds a master's degree in Social Work from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and a bachelor's degree in Business Psychology from Nebraska Wesleyan.



Christie believes Keep Omaha Beautiful provides a unique perspective for considering the wellbeing of both people and the environment, which she integrates into her daily work. Christie is a certified Climate Ambassador through Eco-America and serves on the planning committee for the City of Omaha's Climate Action & Resilience Plan. In addition, Christie serves on MAPA's Solid Waste and Natural Resources committees, and the UNMC College of Public Health's Urban Heat Resilience working group.

Christie was first introduced to Project Extra Mile in 2011 while working for CHI Health. She was introduced to the concept of SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) and quickly became its champion. Christie, passionate about holistic patient care, believed that regular screenings for substance use and mental health concerns should be as routine as checking blood pressure during primary care visits.

Through various challenges and new opportunities, Christie collaborated with PEM to encourage healthcare professionals and systems to integrate these screenings into their practices. As a result, thousands of patients are now screened each year throughout Omaha. Project Extra Mile has been an exceptional supporter, leader, and innovator in addressing substance use issues in Nebraska using evidence-based practices.

Christie is honored to have been part of this journey for 13 years, attending collaboration meetings, participating in advocacy, and serving on the board of directors.

Please Join Us!



OMAHA METRO COALITION MEETING

August 14, 2024 @ 9:00AM



**UNO's Community Engagement Center
6400 University Drive South
Room 209**

**Please join us as
we welcome
Omaha City Attorney,
Matt Kuhse,
to discuss city efforts to
prevent alcohol-related harm.**



More Information :
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402-963-9047
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**PROJECT EXTRA MILE
2024 COALITION
MEETINGS**

JANUARY 17TH
FEBRUARY 14TH
MARCH 13TH
APRIL 10TH
MAY 8TH
JUNE 12TH
NO MEETING IN JULY
AUGUST 14TH
SEPTEMBER 11TH
OCTOBER 9TH
NOVEMBER 13TH
DECEMBER 11TH

LOOKING FORWARD TO CONNECTING WITH YOU IN 2024



**MEETINGS HELD AT
UNO'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER
6400 UNIVERSITY DRIVE SOUTH**



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