



District of Columbia Government
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A
PO Box 15020
Washington, DC 20003



September 23, 2025

The Honorable Chairman Phil Mendelson and
Members of the Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 504
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Chairman Mendelson and Honorable Members of the Council:

At a regularly scheduled and properly noticed meeting¹ on September 11, 2025, the Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A, voted 7-0-0 (with 4 Commissioners required for a quorum) to send this letter to you regarding alcohol and cannabis laws and regulation in the District of Columbia.

ANC 6A believes that alcohol and cannabis have come to serve similar roles in our society. Both substances are intoxicants and can be used by individuals aged 21 and older to self-medicate. However, a growing body of peer-reviewed medical literature documents the potential health risks of even moderate levels of consumption of both of these substances. These health risks include the potential for users to develop physical and/or emotional dependences and/or to temporarily or permanently manifest altered behavior. All of these outcomes can impact not only the individual using the substance, but also their communities.

Accordingly, we see no reason that the two substances should not be regulated in congruent fashions, especially as it regards:

1. Mechanisms and grounds for community input;
2. Protection of neighbors' property, property values, and their peaceful enjoyment of their homes and businesses; and
3. Protection of the health and safety of individuals in areas proximate to these licensees' establishments, especially children and other physically or medically vulnerable individuals; and
4. The right to petition for moratoria is essential for the success of these corridors. At the same time, however, we reject the current set of laws and regulations which dramatically limit community input and constrain the basis by which communities can protest or seek to modify the potential impact of these establishments, particularly retail cannabis vendors, on the community.

Specifically, we are asking that the laws/regulations be modified such that:

¹ ANC 6A meetings are advertised electronically on anc-6a@googlegroups.com, and newhilleast@groups.io, at www.anc6a.org, on Twitter (@ANC6A) and through print advertisements in the Hill Rag.

1. Individuals and entities with standing to protest the granting, expansion, renewal or transfer of a liquor or cannabis license be made consistent for both types of licenses and conform to the provisions of § 25-601(Attached)
2. Both cannabis and alcohol licensees be held to the same appropriateness standards specified for alcohol in § 25-313. (See attached)
3. The Board should consider the factors specified in **§ 25-314 in determinations regarding both alcohol and cannabis licenses**, and that parties with standing should be allowed to protest both cannabis and liquor licenses based on these considerations.

Furthermore, we would ask that paragraph **§ 25-314 (b)(5) be repealed** because we believe that children who use schools, preschools, libraries etc. in commercial corridors deserve to be protected as well as those who use facilities located in solely residential zones.

We also suggest that hospitals and medical clinics should be added to the list of facilities protected under **§ 25-314**

4. Finally, although applications for new cannabis licenses are, at least temporarily suspended, anomalies have resulted in some new license applications still before the Board. Additionally, individuals who hold licenses without a location may still seek to open new establishments in our communities. Thus, the final locations and density of these facilities is still in flux. Accordingly, we request that the laws and regulations be modified to allow communities to apply for cannabis license moratoriums according to a methodology similar to the procedures for alcohol license moratoriums specified at **§ 25-352. Procedures to request a moratorium.**

We look forward to your responses. Should you have any questions, please contact me at 6A05@anc.dc.gov or Commissioner Velasquez at 6A02@anc.dc.gov.

On behalf of the Commission



Dave Wethington, Chair
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 6A District of Columbia

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration

Source of excerpts below:

<https://abca.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/abra/publication/attachments/ABRA%20Code%20Book%20-%20Updated%208-22.pdf>

§ 25-601. Standing to file protest against a license.

(a) The following persons may protest the issuance or renewal of a license, the approval of a substantial change in the nature of operation as determined by the Board under § 25-404, or the transfer of a license to a new location:

(1)(A) An abutting property owner; (B) For the purposes of this paragraph, the term “abutting property” means any property where the property line has a boundary or boundary point in common with the property line of the licensed establishment.

(2) A group of no fewer than 5 residents or property owners of the District sharing common grounds for their protest; provided, that in a moratorium zone established under § 25-351 (or in existence as of May 3, 2001), a group of no fewer than 3 residents or property owners of the District sharing common grounds for their protest;

(3) A citizens association incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia located within the affected area; provided, that the following conditions are met: (A) Membership in the citizens association is open to all residents of the area represented by the association; and REVISED AUGUST 2022 107 (B) A resolution concerning the license application has been duly approved in accordance with the association's articles of incorporation or bylaws at a duly called meeting, with notice of the meeting given to the voting body and the applicant at least 7 days before the date of the meeting;

(4) An affected ANC;

(5) In the case of property owned by the District within a 600-foot radius of the establishment to be licensed, the Mayor;

(6) In the case of property owned by the United States within a 600-foot radius of the establishment to be licensed, the designated custodian of the property; or

(7) The Metropolitan Police Department District Commander, or his or her designee, in whose Police District the establishment resides. (b)(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2) of this subsection, an individual or entity that holds a valid wholesaler's license, manufacturer's license, or retailer's license shall not be permitted to protest the issuance or renewal of a license, the approval of a substantial change in the nature of operation, as determined by the Board under §25-404, or the transfer of a license to a new location. (2) An individual who resides in the neighborhood where the establishment is to be licensed and who holds a wholesaler's license, manufacturer's license, or retailer's license may protest the issuance or

renewal of a license, the approval of a substantial change in the nature of operation, as determined by the Board under § 25-404, or the transfer of a license to a new location if the individual otherwise has standing pursuant to subsection (a)(1) or (2) of this section.

§ 25-313. Appropriateness standard.

(a) To qualify for issuance, renewal of a license, transfer of a license to a new location, or an application for the approval of a substantial change in operation as determined by the Board under § 25-404, an applicant shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Board that the establishment is appropriate for the locality, section, or portion of the District where it is to be located. (b) In determining the appropriateness of an establishment, the Board shall consider all relevant evidence of record, including:

- (1) The effect of the establishment on real property values;
- (2) The effect of the establishment on peace, order, and quiet, including the noise and litter provisions set forth in §§ 25-725 and 25-726; REVISED AUGUST 2022 69
- (3) The effect of the establishment upon residential parking needs and vehicular and pedestrian safety; and ,,,

§ 25-314. Additional considerations for new license application or transfer of license to a new location.

(a) In determining the appropriateness of an establishment for initial issuance of a license or a transfer of a license to a new location, the Board shall also consider the following:

- (1) The proximity of the establishment to schools, recreation centers, day care centers, public libraries, or other similar facilities;
- (2) The effect of the establishment on the operation and clientele of schools, recreation centers, day care centers, public libraries, or other similar facilities; and
- (3) Whether school-age children using facilities in proximity to the establishment will be unduly attracted to the establishment while present at, or going to or from, the school, recreation center, day care center, public library, or similar facility at issue.
- (4) Whether issuance of the license would create or contribute to an overconcentration of licensed establishments which is likely to adversely affect the locality, section, or portion in which the establishment is located.

(b)(1) No license shall be issued for any establishment within 400 feet of a public, private, or parochial primary, elementary, or high school; college or university; or recreation area operated by the District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation, except as provided in paragraphs (2) through (11) of this subsection.

(2) The 400-foot restriction shall not apply to a restaurant, hotel, club, caterer's, bed and breakfast, or temporary license.

(3)(A) The 400-foot restriction shall not apply if there exists within 400 feet a currently-functioning establishment holding a license of the same class at the time that the new application is submitted.

(B) The exception to the 400-foot restriction in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph shall not apply if the currently operating establishment holding a license of the same class is exempt from the 400- foot restriction under paragraph (8) of this subsection.

(4) The 400-foot restriction shall not apply if: (A) The applicant applies for an off-premises retailer's license, class B, that meets the definition of a full-service grocery store, as defined in § 25-101(22A); (B) The sale of alcoholic beverages constitutes no more than 15% of the total volume of gross receipts on an annual basis;

§ 25-314. Additional considerations for new license application or transfer of license to a new location.

(a) In determining the appropriateness of an establishment for initial issuance of a license or a transfer of a license to a new location, the Board shall also consider the following:

(1) The proximity of the establishment to schools, recreation centers, day care centers, public libraries, or other similar facilities;

(2) The effect of the establishment on the operation and clientele of schools, recreation centers, day care centers, public libraries, or other similar facilities; and

(3) Whether school-age children using facilities in proximity to the establishment will be unduly attracted to the establishment while present at, or going to or from, the school, recreation center, day care center, public library, or similar facility at issue.

(4) Whether issuance of the license would create or contribute to an overconcentration of licensed establishments which is likely to adversely affect the locality, section, or portion in which the establishment is located.

(b)(1) No license shall be issued for any establishment within 400 feet of a public, private, or parochial primary, elementary, or high school; college or university; or recreation area operated by the District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation, except as provided in paragraphs (2) through (11) of this subsection.

(2) The 400-foot restriction shall not apply to a restaurant, hotel, club, caterer's, bed and breakfast, or temporary license. (3)(A) The 400-foot restriction shall not apply if there exists within 400 feet a currently-functioning establishment holding a license of the same class at the time that the new application is submitted. (B) The exception to the 400-foot restriction in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph shall not apply if the currently operating establishment holding a license of the same class is exempt from the 400- foot restriction under paragraph (8) of this subsection.

(4) The 400-foot restriction shall not apply if: (A) The applicant applies for an off-premises retailer's license, class B, that meets the definition of a full-service grocery store, as defined

in § 25-101(22A); (B) The sale of alcoholic beverages constitutes no more than 15% of the total volume of gross receipts on an annual basis; (C) The establishment is not located in a residential-use district as defined in the zoning regulations and shown in the official atlases of the Zoning Commission for the District of Columbia, or if located within the Southeast Federal Center, in the SEFC-1 zone; (D) The opinion of the ANC, if any, in which the establishment is located has been given great weight; and (E) The applicant does not hold a manufacturer's or wholesaler's license.

(5) The 400-foot restriction shall not apply where the main entrance to the college, university, or recreation area, or the nearest property line of the school is actually on or occupies ground zoned commercial or industrial according to the official atlases of the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia.

(6) The 400-foot restriction shall not apply to an application for a retailer's license, class IA or IB.

(7) The 400-foot restriction shall not apply to an applicant for a retailer's license, class B, if the applicant's establishment will be located inside of a hotel and will have no direct public access to the street or the outside of the hotel's building. (8) The 400-foot restriction shall not apply to an application for an on-premises retailer's license, class CT, DT, CX, or DX, or an off-premises retailer's license, class A or B, located in the Mixed Use-12 Zone, Square 473 according to the official atlases of the Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia

§ 25-352. Procedures to request a moratorium.

(a) The moratorium request shall be made to the Board in writing, stating:

(1) The name and address of the individual, group, or business entity seeking the moratorium;

(2) The area of the District to be covered by the moratorium;

(3) The class or classes of licenses to be covered by the moratorium; and

(4) A detailed statement of the reasons that the moratorium is appropriate under at least 2 of the appropriateness standards set forth in subchapter II of this chapter.

(b) For the purposes of subsection (a)(2) of this section, the individual, group, or business entity seeking the moratorium shall identify one licensed establishment. The area to be covered by the moratorium shall be measured from the property lines of that establishment. The entire area to be covered under a moratorium shall be either a locality, section, or portion.

(c) For the purposes of subsection (a)(3) of this section, a moratorium may be sought for a single class of license or for any combination of the classes of licenses.

(d) No moratorium request to limit the number of licenses to be issued, the number of licenses issued for any single class, or the issuance of amended licenses for any single class that constitute a substantial change shall be considered by the Board unless all the

requirements of subsection (a) of this section have been met and the following conditions are satisfied:

(1) If the requested moratorium area is a locality, there shall exist in the area at least 3 licensed establishments of the same class or 6 licensed establishments of any class or combination of classes;

(2) If the requested moratorium area is a section, there shall exist in the area at least 6 establishments of the same class or 12 establishments of any class or combination of classes; or

(3) If the requested moratorium area is a portion, there shall exist in the area at least 9 establishments of the same class or 18 establishments of any class or combination of classes.

(e) A moratorium request to limit the sale of products by licensees under an off-premises retailer's license, class A and class B, shall not be considered by the Board unless all the requirements of subsection (a) of this section have been met and the following conditions are satisfied:

(1) If the requested moratorium area is a locality, there shall exist in the locality at least 3 class A, 3 class B, or any combination of 3 class A or class B licensed establishments;

(2) If the requested moratorium area is a section, there shall exist in the section at least 5 class A, 5 class B, or any combination of 5 class A or class B licensed establishments; or

(3) If the requested moratorium area is a portion, there shall exist in the portion at least 7 class A, 7 class B, or any combination of 7 class A or class B licensed establishments.

(f) The requirements of this section shall not apply to solicitor's licenses, manager's licenses, caterer's licenses, or to temporary licenses.