



November 9, 2015

Richard Kramer
Chair
Saint Paul Charter Commission
15 Kellogg Blvd. W.
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Saint Paul Charter Commission:

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on proposed changes to the Saint Paul City Charter regarding on-sale liquor licenses.

The Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association (MLBA) represents more than 1,200 on-sale and off-sale liquor license holders across our state, including many in Saint Paul.

We appreciate the City's work over the past year to discuss these proposed changes with a variety of audiences. The MLBA believes that updating Saint Paul's regulations to encourage investment and growth while maintaining a strong and fair environment for existing businesses is a laudable goal.

The vast majority of MLBA's members support removing the cap on on-sale liquor licenses. As on-sale licenses are approved in the future, we encourage city staff and policymakers to ensure that new license holders are carefully screened and commit themselves to running professional, high-quality establishments like those current found across Saint Paul.

Our members have expressed some concerns with elements of the proposal that would require some bar/restaurants to close at midnight, rather than 2:00 am. Doing so could create public safety issues if patrons decide to leave a bar/restaurant that closes at midnight to find another that is open later.

In addition, the midnight closing time could have a stifling effect even as the city desires to encourage more growth. If a new bar/restaurant is required to close at midnight, while their established neighbors are open until 2:00 am, an operator might choose not to invest in a new facility only to start off at a competitive disadvantage.

Overall, we want to express our appreciation for the process and for the City's willingness to work with the business community on this issue. We hope that we can continue to work together to ensure that these changes are implemented smartly and fairly.

Sincerely,

Tony Chesak
Executive Director
Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association
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