



# News Release

Oregon Liquor Control Commission  
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## **OLCC votes to extend 50-cent surcharge through next biennium**

**PORTLAND, OR** – At a special meeting June 3, the commissioners of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission voted 4-0 in favor of extending the 50-cent surcharge on distilled spirits through June 30, 2011. The increase is a 50-cent surcharge per bottle on distilled spirits products and a 25-cent surcharge on minis.

In March, the commissioners adopted the price increase to begin April 1 and end June 30, 2009 to offset the compensation cuts to liquor agents as part of the 2007-2009 budget rebalance.

Depending on sales, the surcharge is expected to generate at least \$27 million through the next two years. Additional revenue generated from the surcharge is expected to benefit the state's general fund.

The Joint Ways and Means committee co-chairs recommended budget would have had a major effect on the liquor store agents in addition to considerable cuts to the agency including a significant number of public safety positions.

"We don't take this action lightly. We realize that these are tough economic times," said Steve Pharo, OLCC Executive Director. "The commission is looking at this increase as a way to safeguard valuable services provided by the OLCC as well as avoiding a substantive compensation loss to liquor agents through the next biennium. By working cooperatively with legislators, we will contribute to filling the 2009-2011 budget shortfall as well as preserving the public safety services our agency provides."

The OLCC budget is scheduled to go before the Ways and Means subcommittee Thursday, June 4 at 3:00 p.m.

Part of today's presentation included a statement from a member of the distilled spirits industry read by Greg Sellers of Beam Global Spirits and Wine. In the statement, Sellers indicated that the Oregon distillers are feeling discriminated against compared to Oregon brewers in terms of tax increases. He pointed out that while the surcharge affects distilled spirits, the beer tax has not increased since 1977.

Liquor agents are independent contractors who manage and operate the liquor stores. The stores are required to be open a minimum of eight hours a day Monday through Saturday with six of those hours between noon and 6 p.m. Liquor agents have the discretion to be open Sundays and legal holidays. Hours of operation, vary from store to store.

The five citizen commissioners are the policy-making body of the OLCC. They meet monthly for one or two days to make decisions on liquor licenses, rules, contested case hearings and appointments of liquor store agents. Commission meetings are held every other month at OLCC's main office, 9079 SE McLoughlin Blvd., Room 103A in Portland. Subsequent months, the meetings are held via phone. Agenda items can be obtained on-line at [http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/public\\_meetings.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/OLCC/public_meetings.shtml)

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