

ALMR Press Notice

Thursday 17th September 2009.

ALCOHOL CODE - "UNNECESSARY AND UNWELCOME"

The Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers welcomed today's news that the Business Secretary, Lord Mandelson, has recommended that the proposed Code of Practice on Alcohol Retailing be shelved as "a glimmer of hope" for licensees, but warned that it was only a "step in the right direction" not a permanent solution.

Today's *Times* newspaper reports that Mandelson has recommended that a raft of regulations to be delayed due to the recession, including the mandatory alcohol code. In a letter to Cabinet colleagues, Mandelson wrote: *"I support the approach that where measures appear without a planned implementation date — and on the assumption they are not planned for the near future — we commit to not imposing these measures until after April 2011."*

Responding to the news, *ALMR* Chief Executive, Nick Bish, said:

"We welcome the news that the Government is prepared to listen to the arguments being put forward by the trade and that Lord Mandelson in particular has recognised the commercial imperative. This is clearly as much a political as a business decision – for the benefit of the Labour Party rather than the pub trade"

"Mandelson's announcement is nothing more than a recommendation for delay – not a scrapping of the Code itself. It will mean nothing unless it is translated into actual practical action. The Policing and Crime Bill is still going through Parliament and, if adopted as drafted, will still give Ministers the power to introduce a Code in the future.

"The Bill will be debated again by the House of Lords on 13th October and unless the clause setting out the Code is deleted from the Bill, today's announcement will be a pyrrhic victory. If the Code is not right for now, it is not right for later"

<ENDS>

Notes for editors

- *ALMR* is the only national trade body solely dedicated to representing the interests of pub and bar operators, and to providing them with business support and advice. It has almost 100 member companies, operating over 10,000 outlets.
- The Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Policing and Crime Bill – which will be used to introduce the new code - estimates the new code could cost pubs up to £700 each per year: This equates to a cost of some £300 million for the industry as a whole. The Bill will be debated in the House of Commons on Tuesday 19th May 2009.

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