



Economic Affairs Interim Committee Members,

In the last session, I compiled and presented information on the number of Alcohol Outlets in Montana. At the August 31, 2015 Economic Affairs Interim Committee Meeting, Senator Tom Facey requested an update on these numbers. What follows is that updated information, which I committed to providing to the Committee.

Montana has a population-based quota system. For example, the areas of Helena and East Helena are combined—because of their proximity to each other—and are called a “combined quota area.” This combined quota area contains a total of 83 on-premise locations, which includes 42 All Beverage Licenses, 20 Beer Licenses, 19 Restaurant Beer and Wine Licenses, one operating brewery sample room, and one distillery sample room. These numbers do not include fraternal or veteran organizations. At last count, this combined quota area encompassed a population of 32,003. 32,003 citizens divided by 83 businesses equals one place to drink for every 386 people. To be clear, this includes adults and children.

Off-premise locations like grocery, gas, and convenience stores, as well as a few liquor stores, also serve the Helena area with alcohol.

Helena is not an anomaly. Montana oversees roughly 3,394 licensed retailers of alcohol, counting on- and off-premise licenses. With the State’s population at just over 1 million people, this breaks down to one alcohol outlet for every 302 citizens. Again, this number includes adults and children.

So, when visitors come to Montana and ask, “Where can I get a drink around here?” the answer is “Just about anywhere.”

John Iverson

Montana Tavern Association

*“Every man owes a part of his time and money to the business or industry in which he is engaged. No man has a moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within his sphere.” --Theodore Roosevelt*