



CA Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control
Oakland City Attorney's Office

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City of Oakland, State Dept. of Alcoholic Beverage Control Close Down Nuisance Bar

OAKLAND, CA – On Monday, April 6, the State Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control posted a notice indefinitely suspending the liquor license of the Seven Seas Bar in Oakland's Laurel District (4001 MacArthur Boulevard) after a simultaneous enforcement action by ABC, the Oakland Police Department and the Oakland City Attorney's Office.

The Seven Seas lost its license after an undercover operation by ABC investigators that resulted in multiple arrests and charges against the bar's owners for receiving purported stolen property. The owners were charged after buying what they thought were cases of stolen alcohol from ABC agents. In January of this year, ABC also suspended the license of the adjacent Seagull Market as a result of the same undercover operation.

The closure of the Seven Seas is part of an ongoing effort by the state and the city to shut down or clean up problem liquor outlets in Oakland.

"The majority of bars and liquor stores in Oakland are good businesses," City Attorney John Russo said at a Monday press conference at the site. "Unfortunately, too many are sources of chronic nuisance behavior, crime and violence. Our approach continues to be to work with the owners to shape up – and if they don't, to work closely with the other agencies here today to shut them down."

ABC's suspension of the bar's license coincides with a City of Oakland enforcement action at the same property. Last year, the City Attorney filed a public nuisance action against the Seven Seas and the Hoang brothers, the property owners who rent to the Seven Seas and the Seagull Market. The city's lawsuit, based on work by Oakland police investigators, was filed in response to repeated incidents of violence at the Seven Seas, including three shootings in the space of one year that began as disputes inside the bar and spilled out into the neighborhood.

"Neighbors have been complaining for years to the local Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council about loitering, possible drug activity and underage patronage at the Seven Seas," said City Councilmember Jean Quan, who represents the neighborhood. The Seven Seas "became a priority for Oakland Police Problem Solving Officer Anne Pierce and Neighborhood Services Coordinator Renee Sykes, who worked with our office and local residents to report suspicious activity around the bar to the City's drug hotline and to work with Carolyn Ortler of the City Attorney's Office to build a case."

Since January 2008, ABC investigators have filed nearly 50 accusations in Oakland that have resulted in seven revocations or indefinite suspensions, 15 suspensions, 12 fines and four licenses that were either cancelled or surrendered to ABC after an accusation was filed. Another 12 cases are pending.

ABC is also pursuing administrative actions against another 21 businesses in Oakland that recently sold alcohol to minors. The violations occurred during five separate minor decoy operations in December, 2008, and January and February, 2009. ABC visited 40 locations and over half sold alcohol to a minor decoy.

“We want to hold violators of the law accountable so we can increase safety for the citizens of Oakland,” said ABC Director Steve Hardy.

Last week – the night before ABC was originally scheduled to post the suspension of Seven Seas’ license – a fire caused extensive damage to both the bar and the market. The cause was under investigation by the Oakland Fire Department/Oakland Police Department arson team.
