

Utah: Liquor Commissioner Suggests Ban on Gas Station Beer Sales

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Utah liquor Commissioner Gordon Strachan wants the state to consider banning the sales of beer at gas stations in order to reduce drinking and driving, The Salt Lake Tribune reported.

Strachan commented on the possibility of a ban during a recent meeting of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission. His term as Commissioner ends in July. Dave Davis, president of the Utah Food Industry Association, objected to the idea of a ban, saying that it would be "a bad idea in a state that already has established a reputation for quirky alcohol laws." Davis added: "We haven't seen any empirical data that link sales at convenience stores to increased drunk driving rates. Banning beer sales at convenience stores would just be another feather in that cap of quirky laws."

The Utah Legislature has the power to issue a ban on beer sales. Sen. John Valentine (R-Orem) stated that he is open to discussing the possibility.

"I would want to know whether there's a connection," said Valentine. "It is also my policy to meet with people who would be affected by the legislation."

Currently, state-controlled outlets sell heavy beer, wine and distilled spirits. Convenience stores and supermarkets can only sell reduced-alcohol 3.2 percent beer.