



January 3, 2010

Don't mess with beer tax

Raising Michigan's highest-in-the-region beer tax is a terrible idea because it will further disadvantage local businesses, including distributors, bars and brewers.

On top of our high beer tax, Michigan consumers must pay for our bottle deposit, squeezing them further and hurting sales for Michigan businesses, especially those near Indiana and Ohio.

I've worked in border areas and seen stores close, jobs vanish and communities suffer. Michigan has mercifully held the beer tax at the current rate because responsible policymakers and opinion leaders recognize that raising it will devastate local economies even more.

It is not, as Rich Robinson (Viewpoint, Dec. 17) unfairly and irresponsibly claims, because of distributors' open and transparent engagement in the political process. For Robinson to spin wild conspiracy theories or assign secret motives where none exist is unfair to Michigan's family-owned beer distributors and the 5,100 hardworking men and women we employ.

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