



For Immediate Release:
April 12, 2019

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Distilled Spirits Council Statement in Response to the Call for Increased Alcohol Excise Taxes by the Task Force on Fiscal Policy for Health

Washington, D.C. – This report is a missed opportunity to reduce harmful alcohol consumption in low and middle-income countries and will have a counterproductive effect. The report’s recommendation for all countries to significantly raise alcohol taxes will exacerbate dangerous illicit alcohol consumption and expand illegal alcohol markets, which is a growing problem in many developing countries.

A recent Euromonitor International study of 24 countries in Africa, Eastern Europe and Latin America found that 26 percent of the total volume of alcohol consumed is illicit. The study showed there are some areas such as Africa where illicit alcohol represents 40 percent of the total alcohol market.

As the Task Force report stated, “there is a large variation in the use of alcohol across countries and regions.” A more reasonable and effective approach is to address issues surrounding alcohol abuse country by country, taking into account the culture, individual alcohol consumption patterns and the marketplace.

The distilled spirits industry is strongly opposed to abusive alcohol consumption and has long supported evidence-based policies in partnership with governments and other stakeholders in these efforts to reduce harmful use of alcohol in the United States and abroad.

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The [Distilled Spirits Council](#) is the leading voice and advocate for distilled spirits in the United States.