



June 18, 2012

Dear Amherst Select Board:

The Campus and Community Coalition to Reduce High-Risk Drinking (CCC) recently learned of Hess Express' application for an off-premise beer and wine license at its store at 468 West Street. We urge the Select Board to consider the impact of increased alcohol retail outlet density in the Town of Amherst; a factor shown to increase alcohol consumption among underage and high-risk drinkers.

Alcohol has devastating effects among college students. National surveys show that 44% of all college students engage in binge drinking, and that half of those students binge drink frequently (two or three times a week). College administrators link alcohol with over 40% of incidents of lowered academic performance and alcohol is involved in more than 40% of all campus incidents of injury to self or others. Two-thirds of college women with unplanned pregnancies report they were intoxicated at the time of conception. On campuses where more than half of the students drink to excess, 87% of residential students report experiencing one or more problems as a result of other students' drinking.

Colleges and universities across the country are working hard with local communities to stem underage and high-risk drinking, and change elements of campus culture that tolerate, condone or support abusive drinking. The CCC brings together university and community stakeholders to promote responsible decision-making about alcohol and other drug use. The aim of our work is to implement effective environmental strategies for the prevention of high-risk drinking, using data and nationally-recognized best practices. The CCC has been the catalyst for alcohol policy changes, town bylaw revisions, increased enforcement and expanded partnerships. Since its inception in 2005, dangerous drinking among UMass students is down by 48%.

We urge the Select Board to uphold the standards of excellence created by responsible retailers who have joined the CCC's Retail Partners Committee. We hope that you will encourage Hess Express, if granted a license, to join the team of retailers who exchange ideas and creative solutions to underage and high-risk drinking, employ best practices and policies, participate in voluntary compliance checks and youth purchase surveys, and use the best ID scanning technology available.

The work and success of the coalition is built upon communication and collaboration among all of our members. We are fortunate to have many retail partners at the table, committed to reducing dangerous drinking in our community.

Again, thank you for playing a role in this collective effort. To learn more about the CCC, please contact either of us at the e-mail addresses below, or call (413) 577-5181.

Sincerely,

Sally Linowski, Ph.D., CHES
CCC Co-Chair
Director, Center for Health Promotion
University of Massachusetts Amherst
sallyl@uhs.umass.edu

Lisa Queenin
CCC Co-Chair
Director, Community & Regional Legislative Relations
University of Massachusetts Amherst
lqueenin@admin.umass.edu