
From:
Sent: 03 May 2013 12:15
To: Pubs Consultation Responses
Subject: Pubco Reform

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have always valued the English pub, both in my local area and when travelling. They provide a unique community focus, hospitality and at best, a good choice of affordable food and good quality real ale. They are a much safer and healthier drinking option than consumption at home of supermarket alcohol, and park bench consumption. My interest is largely as a consumer, and through a friend's micro-brewery experience.

However, in the last couple of decades I have been increasingly alarmed by the rate of pub closure, and the lack of competitive choice resulting from the abuse of the market by pubcos. Self-regulation has not worked, so please ensure that a statutory Code of Practice is established to regulate pubcos, which includes mandatory offering of a market rent-only option for licensees, along with a guest beer option. The code should be enforced by a powerful new independent adjudicator to arbitrate disputes, investigate breaches and impose financial penalties where rules are broken.

It is not necessary to apply this to family brewers with tied pubs, so a fair break-point would be to apply it to companies with 500 pubs or over, as long as the smaller businesses abide by a separate voluntary code. The test of the success of any new legislation should be that tied licensees are no worse off than free of tie licensees, and this test should be at the heart of the code.

Yours sincerely,

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