

After a months-long wait, Arctic Valley gets cleared to serve beers this winter



By Melinda Bolton | Posted: Tue 6:05 PM, Aug 14, 2018 | Updated: Wed 12:09 PM, Aug 15, 2018

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (KTUU) — Cheers to winter.

Staff at Arctic Valley Ski Area can more enthusiastically welcome skiers and snowboarders back to the area with offerings of adult beverages after a day on the slopes. But for the last two months, General Manager John Robinson-Wilson says he was weighing his options after the ski area's recreational beer and wine license wasn't simply renewed in June.

He says Alcohol Control Board Director Erika McConnell decided that recreational license holders should host competitive events; something he says state statute doesn't support. Incidentally, the small competitions the ski area does host wouldn't satisfy McConnell's perspective, according to Robinson-Wilson.

Robinson-Wilson says since Arctic Valley first got a recreational beer and wine license in 2010, it has never been the subject of a complaint from the park or the city, and being able to offer that service, while making up just 3 percent of their overall budget, is important for other reasons.

"Those who are skiers and snowboarders know that having a beer at the end of the day is a big part of the experience, so not being able to do that would hurt us in just being able to attract people there generally," Robinson-Wilson said. "We've been able to grow our community a lot and get members and volunteers and donors and board members by kind of recruiting them over a beer at the end of the day of skiing and explaining what we're all about."

During a meeting in Healy today, the Alcohol Control Board voted to approve Arctic Valley's license renewal in a 4-1 vote with Robert Evans as the lone "no" vote.



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In a written statement sent to KTUU Tuesday night, McConnell said that while her role includes making recommendations to the ABC Board, the decision on licenses ultimately falls to board members.

"The ABC Board has the authority to interpret statute as long as its interpretation is consistent with the statute," McConnell said. "My roll, as the director, is to collect the facts and present them to the board, and make a recommendation. I have no authority to make decisions on licenses—that is the board's job."

This article has been updated to include a statement from AMCO Director Erika McConnell.

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