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***PUBLIC HEALTH SCORES IN L.A.
COUNCILMEMBER RICHARD ALARCÓN INTRODUCES A MOTION TO
BAN ALCOHOL ADS FROM ALL CITY-OWNED PROPERTY***

LOS ANGELES, CA (August 16, 2011) The Coalition to Ban Alcohol Ads from Public Property (NoAlcoholAds.org) rallied outside Los Angeles City Hall this morning in support of Councilman Richard Alarcón's introduction of a motion at today's City Council meeting to ban alcohol ads on *all* City-owned property. The Councilman is also supporting approval of a new 10-year bus bench contract that includes a provision to prohibit alcohol ads on bus benches.

Mr. Alarcón's motion requests that the Los Angeles City Attorney, with the assistance of the L.A. Public Works Commission, Department of Building and Safety, Planning Department and General Services Department *"prepare an ordinance within 60 days to prohibit alcohol advertising on city owned and controlled property modeled after similar ordinances in San Francisco and Philadelphia."*

"Councilmember Alarcón's motion to ban alcohol ads on all public property acknowledges Los Angeles' commitment to protect public health and safety," stated Jorge Castillo, advocacy and outreach manager for Alcohol Justice (formerly Marin Institute). *"We look forward to campaigning with Mr. Alarcón to build the support to pass this ordinance as well as approve the bus bench contract that specifically prohibits alcohol ads on bus benches."*

The City Council postponed until Friday action on awarding Florida-based Martin Outdoor Media, LLC the exclusive right to build and/or maintain a minimum of 6,000 city-owned bus benches and sell advertising space on them. In the new contract, "labeled and/or branded alcohol" joins the list of items prohibited from advertising on bus benches along with tobacco, firearms, adult bookstores, adult theaters, adult escort services, and pornographic or obscene matters.

"Many people are concerned not only with visual blight, but with the content of outdoor advertising messages such as those aimed at increasing consumption of alcohol," said Dennis Hathaway, President of the Coalition to Ban Billboard Blight. *"The city can legally limit these kinds of messages on public property such as bus benches, shelters, kiosks, and billboards and took an impressive first step today to do so."*

Individuals and groups throughout the city and state joined together as the *Coalition to Ban Alcohol Ads from Public Property* to campaign for alcohol ad bans and found a responsible corporate partner when Martin Outdoor Media was quick to support the concept of prohibiting alcohol ads on bus benches in their new proposed contract with Los Angeles.

“Our company is pleased to work along side the City and the Coalition to Ban Alcohol Ads from Public Property to promote public health in Los Angeles,” stated Scott Martin, President of Martin Outdoor Media, LLC. “As the parent of a 10 and an 11 year-old I believe if we can prevent one more underage youth from taking his first drink, we will have done our job.”

The Los Angeles Department of Public Health recently recommended that "reducing alcohol advertising in public spaces and in areas commonly seen by minors," would help discourage underage drinking. The Los Angeles MTA does not allow any alcohol advertising on its buses, trains and other transit facilities.

“Children should never be exposed to alcohol ads,” said John O. Whitaker, Jr., CATC, A.W.A.R.E./Tarzana Treatment Centers. “The earlier the exposure to alcohol advertising, the earlier addicts or potential addicts are likely to drink and then use. Today’s announcement by Councilmember Alarcón tells us that we can change the toxic culture that has allowed excessive alcohol advertising in public places.”

“The new generation of clients for the liquor industry will be our children; today we stand tall with Councilmember Alarcón and say we will not let this happen,” stated Ruben Rodriguez, Chair of the Coalition to Ban Alcohol Ads on Public Property in Los Angeles. “We will continue to tell the city fathers to ban alcohol ads on bus benches as well as on all other city property.”

More than 2.3 million underage youth drink alcohol each year in California. Underage drinking costs the state a staggering \$7.3 billion annually. Youth violence, crime, car crashes, and high-risk sex are the most noticeable results.

“Women Against Gun Violence supports a ban on alcohol advertising on bus benches and other public property,” said Margot Bennett, executive director of the organization. “The consumption and abuse of alcohol often plays a significant role in the gun violence that costs thousands of lives and billions of dollars every year.”

The research-based data on the dangers of exposing youth as well as other vulnerable people to alcohol-ads is clear. The more alcohol ads they see, the greater the chance they will over-consume alcohol which leads to alcohol-related harm. L.A. is plagued by over \$10.8 billion in alcohol-related harm every year.

“Anytime we can reduce alcohol advertising on public property, the public benefits,” stated Michael Scippa, public affairs director for Alcohol Justice. Councilmember Alarcón’s motion today to get alcohol ads off all L.A. city-owned property has our full support.”

A 2007 study by Alcohol Justice found that many cities in the U.S. already restrict alcohol ads from appearing on mass transit systems, and the city and county of San Francisco enacted an ordinance to prohibit alcohol ads from all public property in future contracts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO: <http://noalcoholads.org/> and www.alcoholjustice.org