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PUBS GIVE A CAUTIOUS WELCOME TO THE LICENSING BILL

The Scottish Beer and Pub Association (SBPA) has today cautiously welcomed the publication of the Licensing (Scotland) Bill and has called on the Scottish Parliament to stay true to the spirit of licensing reform in Scotland.

“The Bill, published today, is the culmination of several years of deliberation by a range of parties, including the industry,” said Patrick Browne, Chief Executive. “ We signed up to all of the recommendations produced by the Nicholson Committee² in its report of August 2003, and these are reflected in the draft Bill published today.

“We look forward to working with the Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament to ensure the legislation delivers on its promise of a licensing system fit for the 21st century, but which balances this alongside the need for action on alcohol misuse and irresponsible promotions.

“One issue that still remains to be resolved is how the transition from the current licensing regime to the new one will be achieved,” continued Browne. “In England and Wales the Government has conceded ‘grandfather rights’ to the licensed trade which will transfer the current trading hours for premises over to the new regime. We would urge the Scottish Executive to do this to provide certainty to the trade and a level playing field for all licensees.”

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Notes for Editors

1. The Scottish Beer and Pub Association was originally formed in 1906. Members are brewing and large pub companies representing the licensed trade industry in Scotland. The main aim of the Association is to contribute to the economic and social wellbeing of Scotland through employment, investment and training. Members account for 1,500 of the 5,100 licensed public houses in Scotland.

2. SBPA served on the Nicholson Committee, which was set up by the Scottish Executive in May 2001 to review Scotland’s licensing laws and make recommendations for change. The Committee reported in August 2003.

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