



News Release

Attorney General Robert E. Cooper, Jr.

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TENNESSEE JOINS OTHER STATES, FDA CAUTIONING CONSUMERS ABOUT POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WITH CAFFEINATED ALCOHOLIC ENERGY DRINKS

Tennessee Attorney General Bob Cooper on behalf of Mary Clement, director of the Division of Consumer Affairs, today joined several other jurisdictions supporting the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) crackdown on alcoholic energy drinks (AEDs). The FDA recently asked that manufacturers of these products provide support for their claims that the use of caffeine and other stimulants in alcoholic beverages are Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) under FDA regulations.

Several attorneys general including Tennessee's recently wrote to the FDA to ask that it take stronger action to ensure the caffeinated alcoholic drinks are safe for consumption under FDA regulations. Although none of the AEDs are made in Tennessee, the products, going by names such as Joose, Four Loko and Four Maxed, are sold in a variety of stores in Tennessee. They are also advertised on the Internet and at the point of purchase in convenience and drug stores.

"We are especially concerned that manufacturers of these products appear to be targeting underage people through youth-oriented media marketing," Attorney General Cooper said. "Studies indicate caffeine appears to mask the feelings of alcohol intoxication, which can lead to risky behavior."

In a supporting letter submitted by the attorneys general to the FDA, scientists and medical professionals who have conducted research in this area conclude consuming alcoholic drinks with caffeine and other stimulants as additives could lead to increased risk-taking and other serious alcohol-related problems such as traffic accidents, violence, sexual assault, and suicide.

Members of the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) Youth Access to Alcohol Committee, including the Tennessee Attorney General, have a longstanding concern regarding AEDs and their promotion to underage consumers. In 2008, several attorneys general and the San Francisco City Attorney initiated investigations of MillerCoors Brewing and Anheuser-Busch, Inc. for AED production and marketing. As a result the companies agreed to stop producing the caffeinated alcoholic beverages. Since that time, other manufacturers have begun making the products packaged in larger volume containers (23.5 oz.) and containing a higher percentage of alcohol (up to 12 percent) than was in MillerCoors and Anheuser-Busch products.

The FDA has given the AED manufacturers 30 days to submit the requested information.