



**DRINK SPECIALS TARGETED BY TIJUANA CITY COUNCIL MEMBER  
Proposal coincides with limiting Tijuana bar hours and effort in California to limit  
promotions and marketing targeted at underage drinkers**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 30, 2003

Contact: Elmar Reyes, 619-296-3311 Ext. 19

TIJUANA -- A Tijuana City Councilman is trying to stop binge drinking in the city's bars and nightclubs by eliminating drink specials in which patrons are allowed to drink as much as they want for a fixed price.

Councilman Maximo Garcia Lopez, president of the Economic Development Commission, has proposed modifying the current alcohol ordinance to ban at the municipal level, all-you-can-drink and ladies night promotions, so that the ordinance can be enforced by municipal regulation inspectors.

While Mexico's federal Secretary of Health already bans such promotions, Tijuana's Municipal Police do not enforce the ban. That's why Tijuana City Councilman Garcia Lopez has proposed the city ordinance.

The move comes on the heels of efforts by Councilman Ranier Alejandro Falcon Martinez, President of the Municipal Youth Commission, to advocate for higher alcohol taxes, a firm 2 a.m. bar closing time and elimination of extra hours of operations. Most bars and nightclubs close at 5 a.m. on weekends. But Falcon wants them to close at 2 a.m. to discourage the all night drinkers, who he says are the most violent, and problematic drinkers from California.

The Tijuana City Council has yet to vote on changing the hours when bars can operate. Both of these measures are aimed at addressing and reducing binge drinking in Tijuana bars and the consequences of these activities on the community members in Tijuana and San Diego.

These consequences are not only a public health concern for the individuals but also one of public safety that impacts the rest of the community through drunk driving crashes, violence and property damage, according to Garcia Lopez.

"Promoting binge drinking should not be allowed, so we need to ban the all-you-can-drink specials and ladies nights, both of which encourage heavier binge drinking," Garcia Lopez said. "Accidents, at times resulting in youth deaths, happen mostly during weekends when the area is very crowded."

Councilman Garcia Lopez announced that his proposal will be submitted to the city council during the next session. He expects support since the rest of the council has shown a lot of concern about binge drinking and the economic, public health & safety impacts to the community.

Meanwhile, on the California side of the border, California State Assemblyman Juan Vargas is focusing on passing a new law that will ban advertising and promotions aimed at minors. Vargas has introduced a bill in the legislature to make it illegal for advertisers, including Tijuana bars and their U.S. based promoters, to target minors in California.

Bars and nightclubs along Tijuana's Avenida Revolucion often host ladies nights and all-you-can-drink promotions after handing out fliers and ads on the U.S. side of the border in areas where young people hang out.

Many of the promoters that entice people under 21 to drink in Mexico are California businesses. They use the radio, Internet, newspapers and flyers (distributed on high school and college campuses) to reach the underage drinking audience in Southern California, creating an information network that draws young people to Tijuana's heavy drinking environment.

The resulting increase in crime, sexual assaults, violence, alcohol related crashes and problems at home and school creates a wake of destruction as intoxicated partiers head north from Mexico, according to recent statistics.

Legislators on both sides of the border are beginning to realize that the all-night, heavy-drinking scene in Tijuana attracts few dollars to Tijuana, compared to the tourism dollars that are driven away by the rowdy and chaotic drinking scene that goes on in the Avenida Revolucion drinking area.

Most of the young U.S. partiers who go to the Tijuana bars spend little compared to the adult restaurant and hotel clients who would visit Tijuana at night if the streets were not dominated by the American youth drinking scene. Lawmakers also have made note of the fact that some of the Tijuana night club owners live in San Diego and take their profits home to the U.S., making the economic benefits to Tijuana negligible.

###