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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
DIVISION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

STATE LIQUOR AUTHORITY

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**Governor Directs Creation of Liquor Authority Rapid Enforcement Unit
State Liquor Authority Unit Will Act Swiftly Against Bad Bars**

ALBANY – (April 11, 2006) -- Governor Pataki today announced that he has directed the New York State Liquor Authority to establish a Rapid Enforcement Unit (REU) within the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control to conduct priority investigations and institute prompt disciplinary action where there exists substantial evidence that a licensed premise poses an imminent threat to public health, safety or welfare.

“This new unit will be on the front lines with local law enforcement to act against bar owners that refuse to follow the law,” said SLA Chairman Daniel B. Boyle. “Under the leadership and direction of Governor Pataki, the SLA will immediately create a Rapid Enforcement Unit to crack down on bars and nightclub owners who do not take responsibility for controlling their establishments.”

The REU will immediately respond to allegations of criminal activity and serious repeat violations of the ABC Law. The REU will include experienced SLA investigators and prosecutors, led by the newly appointed REU director who will coordinate with law enforcement. The REU will quickly react to emergency situations, prosecute disciplinary charges and refer matters to the Members of the Authority for action.

Unit members will be appointed from each region of the State. REU investigations will be flagged by senior SLA management and monitored continually through a new computerized case tracking system. Referrals from the REU will be given top priority by the SLA.

Framework of the SLA Rapid Enforcement Unit (REU):

- The SLA Chairman will appoint a REU Director to coordinate a team of regional liaisons, investigators and legal staff to ensure prompt action on all cases:

- A liaison from each region will coordinate with local officials and law enforcement agencies;
- Enforcement staff from each region will act as first responders;
- An experienced prosecutor from the SLA will act as the legal arm of the Unit;
- REU will rapidly respond where there is an allegation of serious criminal misconduct or repeat violations of the ABC Law. The REU will institute prompt disciplinary action where there is evidence a bar or nightclub poses an imminent threat to public health, safety or welfare;
- Investigations of referrals by a law enforcement agency, or the Chief Executive or governing board of a City, Town, or Village to the REU will begin within 10 days of the alleged violation(s), unless a specific request by law enforcement is made to delay pending the outcome of a criminal investigation; and
- A pleading will be issued to the licensee within five business days if an investigation finds substantial evidence of a violation. If a “not guilty” plea is entered, an expedited hearing will be scheduled. Any alleged violations that constitute a continuing and imminent threat to the public will be sent immediately to the Members of the Authority for a potential summary suspension;
- A new Computerized Case Management System will help coordinate REU activities.

“By enacting this initiative, Governor Pataki has ensured the efforts of the SLA, local law enforcement, municipalities and government agencies will be fully integrated and managed,” said Chairman Boyle. “The Rapid Enforcement Unit will help coordinate SLA efforts with our partners throughout the state in a continuing effort to make our communities safer.”

The State Liquor Authority regulates and controls the manufacture, sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages within the State. The Authority works with local law enforcement agencies and localities across the State to ensure compliance with the Alcoholic Beverage Control Law. In addition, the Authority issues and renews licenses and permits to manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers and retailers of alcoholic beverages.

On the Web: www.abc.state.ny.us

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