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January 15, 2026

On behalf of the Frenchtown School District Board of Trustees, I am writing to express significant concerns regarding the proposed issuance of a retail beer and wine license associated with the Town Pump development near Frenchtown schools.

The Frenchtown School District serves approximately 1,400 students across two campuses that are separated by Interstate 90, a frontage road, and a railroad corridor. This unique configuration requires daily crossings by school buses, student drivers, staff, and pedestrians—including students traveling on foot and by bicycle—through a highly constrained transportation corridor. Traffic congestion, limited turning capacity, and safety conflicts already exist in this area during school start times, dismissal, lunch periods, and school-related events. The Board is interested in whether Town Pump has faced similar school-adjacent traffic conditions at other locations and, if so, what specific mitigation efforts were required or implemented?

The Frenchtown School District has documented multiple traffic accidents in this corridor, including incidents involving school buses and vehicles exiting school property. We had three said accidents during the 2024-2025 school year. Mitigation at the overpass and frontage road should be happening now, even before a business comes to effect.

The proposed licensed premises is located within approximately one-quarter mile of school campuses, adjacent to established bus routes, and directly connected to school facilities by a pedestrian and bicycle pathway. The Board is deeply concerned that authorizing an establishment serving alcohol at this location, particularly one expected to generate additional traffic and extended hours of operation, will further exacerbate existing safety hazards and materially increase risk to students, staff, and families.

Frenchtown is an unincorporated community with limited law enforcement presence and response capacity. In this context, the addition of alcohol service near a concentrated school zone raises serious concerns related to impaired driving, traffic conflicts, pedestrian exposure, and overall public safety during school hours; however, the school hosts many evening events where there are going to be times of heavy traffic between 6:00 pm and 9:30 pm.

While the Frenchtown School District does not take a position on commercial development generally, the Board believes that the welfare of students and residents in the immediate vicinity would be adversely and seriously affected by the approval of a beer and wine license at this location. The cumulative impacts of existing congestion, documented accidents, school-related traffic patterns, and limited enforcement capacity warrant careful consideration.

The Board respectfully urges the Department of Revenue to give substantial weight to these safety and welfare concerns as part of its review of the proposed license. Protecting students and ensuring safe access to school facilities must remain a paramount consideration when evaluating licensure near active school zones. The Frenchtown School District remains open to continued dialogue and collaboration to explore potential solutions should this proposal move forward, with the district's safety concerns clearly acknowledged and addressed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your consideration of the Frenchtown School District's concerns.

Les Meyer
Superintendent; Frenchtown School District

