

Alcoholic Energy Drinks

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If you haven't heard about Rockstar 21, Sparks, Bud Extra and Tilt, you will.

Miller Brewing Company and Anheuser-Busch – the two largest U.S. brewers - are the leading producers of a new alcoholic beverage product capitalizing on the popularity of energy drinks marketed to young people.

Teenagers and young adults are the core consumer groups for energy drinks, and the similarities in containers among the alcoholic and non-alcoholic energy drinks suggest that alcohol producers are marketing alcoholic energy drinks to young people.

“They just recently started appearing on store shelves,” says Pete Schulberg of Oregon Partnership, a statewide nonprofit providing alcohol and drug prevention education. “So now, more young people will be drinking alcoholic beverages combined with high levels of caffeine and sweeteners that will keep them drinking longer. It’s nothing less than a public health hazard courtesy of the companies producing these products.”

This past year, Oregon Partnership helped lead the successful charge against Spykes, an Anheuser-Busch energy drink sold in two-ounce, multi-colored bottles containing 12 percent alcohol. Several months ago, Anheuser-Busch pulled the product from the market.

The California-based [Marin Institute](#), an alcohol industry watchdog group, has just released the most comprehensive report yet on alcoholic energy drinks.

“The available research suggests that alcoholic energy drinks create a dangerous mix,” the report states. “Yet the alcohol industry markets the beverages with messages that fail to alert users to the potential for misjudging one’s intoxication. Indeed, these messages irresponsibly suggest the beverages will enhance alertness and energy.”

The companies market these products as ways to “party all night.” On the Tilt and Bud Extra websites, they say “Move from party to after-party,” “Get your second wind,” and “Who’s up for staying out all night.”

The Marin Institute, along with Oregon Partnership, recommend that the producers of alcoholic energy drinks containing alcohol take them off the market, that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services conducts research on the health and safety of energy drinks and that the Federal Trade Commission investigates energy drink producers’ marketing practices.

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Dann Joins Push for Regulation on Alcohol Advertising

Attorney General Marc Dann joined legal officials in 28 other states Monday in calling on a federal agency to block alcohol manufacturers from issuing misleading statements suggesting that their drinks can produce health-related benefits.

The attorneys general asked the U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau to crack down on advertising campaigns that suggest the alcoholic beverages that contain caffeine or other stimulants can increase a person's stamina or boost energy.

"Non-alcoholic energy drinks are very popular with today's youth," Attorney General Dann said. "Beverage companies are unconsciously appealing to young drinkers with claims about the stimulating properties of alcoholic energy drinks. We urge TTB to take action to stop companies from making misleading claims."

The officials said one ad campaign suggests that a drink can produce renewed strength, but fails to advise of the potential consequences of mixing stimulants and alcohol.

The attorneys general also asked the federal agency to investigate the alcoholic energy drinks to make sure that they are properly classified as malt beverages. In some states, malts are available for broader sales.

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This warning is being sent to inform parents, prevention and treatment professionals, law enforcement, and educators of this emerging trend. Please distribute this information through list serves, newsletters or bulletin boards, etc. using the Ohio Early Warning Network as your source.

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