

Report of the NLLEA Futures Working Group June 29, 2005

An ad hoc committee comprised of Dave Reitz (Chair), Chris Curtis, and Greg Hamilton developed this report.

Over the past five years the NLLEA has achieved significant progress in bringing new recognition and credibility to alcohol law enforcement across the United States. This recognition and credibility has in turn begun to generate new resources for our field, most especially from our working partnerships with the US Departments of Justice (DOJ), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Today we experience increased Congressional support for alcohol law enforcement.

During this time NLLEA has also enhanced existing and developed new working relationships with private sector organizations in the alcohol industry and in public health and safety fields. There is new understanding and support for the role of alcohol law enforcement, and our prospects are bright.

As the NLLEA Futures Working Group we have been examining the various options for ensuring that the NLLEA is best able to take full advantage of these new prospects. NLLEA achievements to date have been secured through the voluntary pro-bono efforts of our Officers and members. In our view, NLLEA will need more resources, in both budget and personnel, to fully realize the opportunities before us. Without these resources, we may well miss historic opportunities. As a result of the climate we have worked so hard to create, the representational needs of NLLEA today exceed the capacities of our current organizational structure.

We have not tried to determine the specific level of representational services NLLEA requires, or whether these services are best provided NLLEA volunteers, by paid staff, or by consultants employed by NLLEA. These are complex issues and fluid over time. In our view these decisions can only be made by the NLLEA Executive Committee in response to specific needs and resource limitations. However, if NLLEA is to provide the independent and articulate representation of alcohol law enforcement perspectives that we desire, we recommend revision of our NLLEA By-Laws to enable greater flexibility to generate dues revenue responsive to specific needs.

Since its inception Agency Memberships have borne the primary financial burden of the Association and we recommend continuation of this tradition. We recommend, however, that the Executive Committee be provided with the option to negotiate annual dues with Agency Members on a case by case basis. If there is one thing in common with NLLEA Agency Members it is that no two Agencies are alike, and NLLEA annual dues should reflect these differences fairly and equitably.

The second principle we would like to advance is that Agency Members that benefit from NLLEA advocacy efforts should share their good fortune with the Association in proportion to the benefits they receive. A hypothetical application illustrates our perspective.

If the proposed “Underage Drinking Prevention and Retail Assistance Act” were to pass and be fully funded at the authorized level of \$50 Million annually, substantially increased funding could be appropriated for state alcohol law enforcement efforts. NLLEA annual dues equal to 2% of new funds an Agency Member received could potentially generate \$1 Million annually. Of course, not all states may wish to apply for funding, and those who do apply would not all receive the funds on the same date, and the NLLEA dues structure should be responsive to this variability. As this hypothetical illustration demonstrates, a single dues fee for Agency Members would not equitably reflect the burden and benefit of NLLEA membership.

The two By-Law revisions we recommend provide the NLLEA Executive Committee with an option, not a mandate. If adopted, the Executive Committee could choose to simply continue to set \$200 annual dues for Agency Members. Alternatively, the Executive Committee could develop an NLLEA strategic development plan and begin a dialogue with Agency Members concerning the merits of the plan and the willingness of Agency Members to fund plan execution. In our view, such a process will bring a new vibrancy and currency (no pun intended) to NLLEA governance.

In summary, the NLLEA Futures Working Group recommends the adoption of the two By-Law changes attached. In our view, these changes provide NLLEA with new flexibility and capacity to respond to the opportunities before us.