

## Legal Food Talk Podcast – Episode 30

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

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Justin Prochnow ([00:18](#)):

Welcome to another edition of Legal Food Talk. Again, I'm your host, Justin Prochnow. Today, I'm happy to be joined by one of my colleagues and friends, Jonathan Bing. Jonathan, welcome to the Legal Food Talk podcast.

Jonathan Bing ([00:32](#)):

Thank you for having me.

Justin Prochnow ([00:33](#)):

Of course. I'm glad we could finally connect here on this. We'd tried to do it once before, and I had a little back issue, but all is good, and we are ready to roll today. So, usually, you're in New York. Not in New York for the taping today?

Jonathan Bing ([00:48](#)):

Correct. I'm at the Democratic Attorney's General Association meeting in San Francisco, so early morning for me, but I'm awake and happy to be here.

Justin Prochnow ([00:56](#)):

I was just recently in New York where it was about four degrees outside. My daughter, shout out, Jordan Prochnow, who is doing her master's in poetry in eastern Washington in Spokane, made the trek across country and met me in New York. And we realized quickly that walking around New York is amazing, but when it's four degrees, it's a little less amazing as you've just got your head down trying to get to the next place without freezing.

Jonathan Bing ([01:23](#)):

And then, avoiding piles of snow that fell several weeks before, as I'm sure you're aware.

Justin Prochnow ([01:28](#)):

That's right. They were piled up, and we made the mistake of making reservations for this new great restaurant with cocktails, and it's on the third floor of this building, only come to find out that it's a glass roof, and it was very cold inside. We quickly moved on to the next spot because rooftop bar sounds great in the summer in New York, not as great in the winter in New York.

Jonathan Bing ([01:53](#)):

They've advanced winter [inaudible 00:01:54] especially as a result of the pandemic where outdoor dining was the only dining that really existed. They have become much more sophisticated in terms of dining with chalets and Rockefeller Center that are heated, and so, there have been advancements. But yes, glass without major heaters would be a little cold.

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Justin Prochnow ([02:11](#)):

Well, we're going to get into some of the restaurants in New York and other places in a little bit, but first, I want to start out with a little background of how Jonathan Bing got here to now helping to run the liquor licensing program at Greenberg and doing things in the food and beverage space. How did your legal career start? I know you went to school at UPenn, and then, law school, and then, didn't go into law right away. So, how did you get started in your career?

Jonathan Bing ([02:39](#)):

Did actually start as a traditional lawyer. I went to Penn and NYU Law School, then clerked for a federal judge in Bismarck, North Dakota for a year, and then, practiced threat management side, employment law in New York for six years before running for the New York State Assembly representing the east side of Manhattan in 2002. Won that first race and was re-elected five times, four times after that, five terms total. And then, in my fifth term, went to take a job with then Governor Cuomo in 2011 to become a special deputy superintendent at the Department of Financial Services.

Justin Prochnow ([03:13](#)):

Let me stop you there. How did you decide to get involved in politics and run for assemblyman in New York? Was there a particular thing that triggered it? Was it something you always wanted to do or...

Jonathan Bing ([03:24](#)):

It was something that I always wanted to do. I mean, I spent my first summer working on Capitol Hill when I was 16 before my 11th grade years. Politics was something that I was always interested in. And then, when I was a associate law firm associate, was also getting involved in community and political activities in the neighborhood in which I grew up. The area where I represented is where I grew up on the Upper East Side. And then, in 2002, the opportunity opened in that the incumbent decided to retire. So, it was a very bitter and expensive four-way democratic primary, and then, followed by a very expensive general election. It was the last Republican seat on the island of Manhattan, an open seat, but a formerly Republican-held seat and the closest race in the state that year, and then, was reelected after that. So, politics was something that I always had an interest in and was planning to run for something if the opportunity arose. And it happened to, it happened to be successful.

Justin Prochnow ([04:19](#)):

Did you ever consider going for what some would consider higher levels-

Jonathan Bing ([04:23](#)):

Yeah, I did. Back in 2010, my congresswoman announced that she was going to leave and run against Kirsten Gillibrand who had been appointed Senator, and she was going to challenge her for the Senate position. So, I started to run for that seat, and then, the congresswoman changed her mind, so it was no longer open, and I decided at that point, obviously, not to run for Congress, and also, probably that it was time to look for other opportunities back in the private sector. More importantly, we had one child, and our second child was on the way. And then, financially, it was not easy to maintain that on the east side of Manhattan. So, then decided to move on from politics sort of halfway first, working for the governor, and then, going and working in law firms in 2012.

Justin Prochnow ([05:08](#)):

What was the group that you worked with with the governor?

Jonathan Bing ([05:11](#)):

I was a special deputy superintendent at the Department of Financial Services where I ran what's called the Liquidation Bureau, which sounds like something-

Justin Prochnow ([05:18](#)):

Sounds like a movie.

Jonathan Bing ([05:19](#)):

Yeah, sounds like something that turns people into food, but it's where insolvent insurance companies go to die. So, because when your insurance company becomes insolvent, still needs to be run because people have policies that need to be paid out regardless of the financial health of the insurance company. So, this entity ran the insolvent insurance companies, and also, worked with the funds in New York and around the country that were used to help prop them up in cases of distress. So, we had about \$3 billion in assets under management while I was there. As an example that had AIG not been bailed out by the federal government, I would've been the CEO of AIG for a time. So, that's kind of where the scale that something like this could be. But most importantly, making sure that if you have an insurance policy with a company that goes bankrupt or insolvent, you can continue to get paid as normal.

Justin Prochnow ([06:10](#)):

Got it. Okay. So, after that, you worked, I know, at a couple different law firms, and then, came over to Greenberg, been about six and a half years?

Jonathan Bing ([06:18](#)):

Yeah, fall of 2019. I had about two or three months before the pandemic started. I've had a not typical GT experience in that the pandemic and the post-pandemic overlaps pretty much my entire tenure.

Justin Prochnow ([06:31](#)):

Yeah. I always thought that was interesting for people who made a move either during COVID or right before it. You come in, and then, don't really meet anyone other than Zoom calls for the better part of the year. It's always an interesting start to a new spot.

Jonathan Bing ([06:46](#)):

Yeah, but I had an office for about two and a half months before we stopped going to the office.

Justin Prochnow ([06:50](#)):

And New York was certainly a different level during COVID that may be out here in Colorado. A little more open, probably some people moving around a little bit more.

Jonathan Bing ([07:01](#)):

We were the epicenter of it, especially at the beginning. From a firm like ours where we were 51 offices around the world, there was definitely a different response depending on where you were and whether it was a blue state or a red state, what the policies were there. So, yeah, New York, I think in some ways,

has never gone back to pre-pandemic office attendance, but our colleagues in Texas and Florida, very little changes to their lives compared to New York.

Justin Prochnow (07:25):

Now, here at Greenberg, I know your practice is multifaceted. You do a lot of different things. But one of the things obviously that certainly is of interest to people on this call is your work in the alcoholic beverage space, but just food and beverage in general, working with a lot of restaurants and other groups on obtaining licensing. And in fact, I know you posted recently, we've got now an official page on the food and beverage website for the liquor licensing group. So, tell us a little bit about what the liquor licensing group is about and the different types of areas that you guys are working on.

Jonathan Bing (08:03):

Sure. As you mentioned, the firm officially recognized the liquor licensing group.

Justin Prochnow (08:08):

It's been going on for a while.

Jonathan Bing (08:10):

Yeah, it's been organized and thanks to Julie Hebdah, who has been handling the marketing, it's been organized. We've had a web page, but the official recognition by the firm has made it a lot more accessible and a lot more linkable and prominent. In connection with that, I was named the chair of the group at the same time. With the work that we do, we have about a dozen lawyers across the country that have specialties in this area, and we handle the liquor licensing process from the beginning, the initial application, through the community outreach, all the way to the end, and securing the license for a wide range of local, national, and international companies, and with the hotels, restaurants, bars, major cultural institutions. So, it's a wide range. We work interactively with other members. So, I have a couple of matters where I'm working with California, Florida, other people in the practice for the same client, working on different aspects of it.

(09:05):

And again, it's unique to big law. It's not a practice. I'm not sure any other big law practice has a liquor licensing group. It's traditionally handled by small firms, or mom-and-pop firms, or paralegals. Some of them are excellent, but again, it is complementary to the practice groups that GT has real estate, corporate, litigation, land use, government law and policy, franchise. So, some of the work that I do is work that has been spun off by other attorneys at the firm, and some of the work I do is clients that I brought in myself. So, it's complementary to the work that I do generally, which is as a New York City, New York state lobbyist, but also, unique. And GT is a firm that really gives you the tools to create something like this and gives you the platform to be successful at it.

Justin Prochnow (09:53):

You're exactly right. I've been here 22 years now, which seems hard to believe. It must mean I was in law school when I was like five. We've done the food and beverage for a long time. We've had that group kind of a similar type of deal where we won the Law360 Food and Beverage Group of the year, and we didn't have an official food and beverage group at the firm. And that kind of spawned us getting that going. And one of the areas where we always had a little bit of a gap was when it came to alcoholic beverages. I probably do more beverage work than almost anyone in the country from a non-alcoholic

basis, but when we got to alcoholic beverages, it was a little bit of crickets of who can do that. And I think the joining of Riley Lagesen and his restaurant group, and now, the liquor licensing group, it really makes it a full complement of things that we can offer people, and it's a perfect compliment to some of the other items we've always been doing.

[\(10:53\)](#):

And as you said, the food and beverage group is a combination of a bunch of different areas of practice. We have the regulatory people like myself and a few others who that's what we do all the time every day. But then, we have labor and employment lawyers who work with restaurants and others on labor and employment issues. We've got the real estate people that are buying locations and helping with leases for restaurants. And then, we've got the franchise people who are working on big food franchises. And now, we've got the liquor licensing group who really does a wide variety of things, as you said, for a wide variety of different types of entities and groups. Maybe give us a little example of a typical... And maybe they're not all typical, but when someone comes to you, how does that get going and what's involved in getting a liquor license for establish-

Jonathan Bing [\(11:47\)](#):

I think the first thing that are important to point out that liquor licensing is governed by state law. So, a lot of things you were just talking about and the regulations here, you're dealing with federal regulations, and you have state regulations as well, especially states like California, New York, which are pushing the envelope in terms of regulation of your line of work. But this is all state law. And the second thing to point out is that these are laws that date back to the end of prohibition in 1933. So, these laws have history based out of view of the world that was not the way the world operates now. Very narrow, focus view of the world, and we're trying to advance modern international corporate structures into very local laws and perceptions of the world. So, that's the challenge. But in terms of what we do, it's really from the... I may be involved from the very beginning from providing provisions that are going to be in contracts between a landlord and the restaurant or the hotel or between the restaurant or the management company for that site.

[\(12:49\)](#):

But then, in terms of the application, it's meeting with the client, getting the basic information to start the process. And in New York, we have something called a 30-day notice that you have to advise the local community board if it's New York City or the local municipality, if it's outside of New York City, that you're planning to apply for a license at a particular place. That starts the process, and then, it's putting together the application, submitting it to the SLA, State Liquor Authority. Sometimes there's a community aspect, especially if the community has concerns about your project, and that's particularly where my background is helpful. Having been an elected official, a state legislator, some of the clients that I've worked for have had matters in my former legislative districts or I know the people who were on the community board and the local elected officials.

[\(13:32\)](#):

And then, through the process. It's a very slow process. In New York, it takes nine or 10 months to get your license. You can get a temporary license but maybe about two or three months in. But it is a very protracted process and not something you want to do without a guide because there are many ways to be tripped up. There are many pieces of correspondence that you could get that make it seem like it's over for you, but nothing is really ever over.

[\(13:57\)](#):

I've never not gotten a license for any client of mine, and I hope that streak continues, even though I may have just jinxed myself. But if you are not sophisticated in this process, you don't want to go into it alone for sure, because you may get a letter from the SLA saying you're done, but rarely does it actually mean you're done for good. So, that's the [inaudible 00:14:16]. So, it's the application, the community process, the outreach to the liquor authority, sometimes outreach to a high-level commissioner or high-level staff to move something forward and to the point of completion where a client gets a license and is good to go for two years before it needs to be renewed again.

Justin Prochnow ([14:31](#)):

So, we have a group. You said, "We've got a group of 11 or so people at least primarily in that." Are those people then doing that same type of thing in different states?

Jonathan Bing ([14:42](#)):

Yes. Some are people who do the application from soup to nuts like I do. Some are people that may not have that specific ability, but they know the State Liquor Authority people and can help smooth things over on a high level. But yes, we have a number of attorneys, especially in Florida, and California, and Colorado where you are that do the same exact things. And sometimes we do it together. Sometimes we have clients that have matters in multiple states, and we're working on same or similar aspects of it, doing same or similar work. But again, just because I know how to get a license in New York, it doesn't mean I know how to get one in New Jersey and or Connecticut.

([15:18](#)):

For instance, in New Jersey, there's caps on licenses for particular areas. So, in order to get a liquor license, you need to go to a broker or go to somebody who's selling their license. And then, there are limits on how many licenses are in a county and things like that. New York doesn't have that. There's unlimited amount of licenses, but it takes a while to get one. So, every state has a different process, and you really need to have a local guide who knows his or her stuff in order to be able to move forward. I should mention also that outside of liquor licensing, we do represent some major fast food and fast casual chains with regard to that are not liquor entities, but have issues especially in New York City with the Department of Consumer Worker Protection. So, we act as conciliary to them. They may be under investigation or have adverse matters, and we give them guidance as well. So, we really work on a lot of different aspects of representing restaurant and similar chains as well as individuals.

Justin Prochnow ([16:09](#)):

So, when we're talking about the liquor licensing, are we talking about mostly just restaurants and other types of places who want to have liquor provided on premises? Are we also doing a liquor store? Is that a different type of licensing or does it all fall under the same purview?

Jonathan Bing ([16:28](#)):

The application is similar, but a liquor store specifically is the hardest application to get done in New York because every liquor store application has to be reviewed by the full board, by the commissioners of the State Liquor Authority. So, even if your community loves it and wants it, you have to go to that process. So, it's particularly protracted and expensive. Also, with regard to liquor stores, you have to get information from the four closest liquor stores, and they have the right to say that if your store gets opened, you're going to kill their business. And during the pandemic, liquor stores, sales went through the roof because the people weren't going out and needed something to help them get through the

difficult times. Now, things are back to somewhat normal, it's a little bit harder, so there's more competition, and it's more of an issue.

[\(17:15\)](#):

So, the general process is the same for whether it's a manufacturing, wholesale, on premises, off premises. And we've done work for gas station convenience stores to major culture institutions. So, we've done everything. I think now, what's happening, especially in New York, is that you have non-traditional providers of alcohol looking for liquor licenses. They may be major retailers or major... Actually, particularly retailers right now that coming to New York and wanting to open up.

[\(17:45\)](#):

So, it could be just be a coffee shop that has liquor as an afterthought or for a time, you had major coffee chain that we were working with that thought they were going to do a beer and wine program and have since decided not to do it. You have also entities that have major international corporate relationships that may have very easily gotten their licenses in France or Italy that come to the U.S., and then, come to a place like New York, which has very specific limitations and struggle to understand why the United States and New York were supposed to be very pro-nightlife and progressive, has all these roadblocks in place that aren't present in other parts of the world.

Justin Prochnow [\(18:22\)](#):

Why do you think all of a sudden, there's been a shift in retailers looking to add cafe? Do you think it's in part because of a lot of the traditional restaurants closing down just because they don't have the personnel? I mean, you look at some of the bigger restaurants, David Chang basically closing most of his restaurants, some of the celebrity chefs. Bobby Flay closing a bunch of his restaurants, and listen to some of their podcasts and basically just saying they can't get reliable workers in the restaurants anymore after COVID. People just don't want to work those types of hours and kind of a shift. So, it seems like maybe this is these retail locations and others filling in that gap with their own personal types of cafes?

Jonathan Bing [\(19:10\)](#):

We've had a huge number of hot restaurants open in New York City over the past couple of years coming out of the pandemic. So, I don't think it's necessarily that they're see an opening because there aren't restaurants to go to. But I think just like movie theaters have expanded their alcohol offerings as a way to encourage people to go to the movies rather than stay in their home entertainment systems, these retailers want to make sure there's a reason for you to not just stay home and shop online, but actually go to the store and having to have the experience of being there. So, part of what they do is whether it could be a very sophisticated, high-end restaurant, a full service, or they may just be a cafe with the packaged foods, but something to encourage you to come out and go to the store in person rather than just stay home and really make it more of a full entertainment experience rather than just something that the shopping which you could do online at home.

Justin Prochnow [\(20:01\)](#):

Makes sense. So, as a compliment to the liquor licensing group, and I kind of mentioned it a little before, we certainly get a lot of questions about just alcoholic beverages. Can you help me with my tequila product? Can you help me with my... Some other spirits product? I get a lot of calls about hard seltzers because there's a dividing line in alcoholic beverages for those of you out there. If it's spirit-based or hops and malt-based beverages, then it's regulated by the TTB, the Bureau, Tobacco and Trade. If it's a

hard seltzer with alcohol from sugar, then it's a product regulated by the FDA. So, we do a lot of hard seltzer products. Certainly during COVID, there was a lot of drinking of hard seltzers. That's where some of the more popular ones just became the White Claws, some of the beer retailers who then had their own hard seltzers came out. Very popular product.

[\(21:02\)](#):

So, we work with a lot of companies in that space. I know that we also have some people... I think Matt out in Denver works on some craft beer type of products. So, we have some of that capability now as well, which is really good because again, that was in a firm of 53 offices and over 3,000 lawyers. I always joke like if you need a divorce lawyer in the Sudan, we probably have eight people who can help out with that. And hopefully, no one needs that.

Jonathan Bing [\(21:29\)](#):

And if we don't have it, we know somebody. What I do is very state law specific, and especially our colleagues in the franchise practice, they'll reach out to me, "Can we do this work in Montana or Oklahoma?" And have to remind them that just because I know how to do it in New York, I don't have the ability to do it in other states because I don't [inaudible 00:21:46], but I am part of a national organization called the National Association of Liquor and Compliance Professionals, which go to an annual meeting and have relationship there. So, I pretty much can recommend someone pretty much any state that we need a recommendation in where we don't have this in-house. But yes, we do all that too. And again, and those are important dividing lines because for instance, a grocery store or gas station grocery store can't have wine above a certain level, or hard seltzer, or malt beverage, or whatever they can sell, but other things, they can't sell. What that product is will have a big bearing on how successful it can be in, say, like New York.

Justin Prochnow [\(22:22\)](#):

Well, as part of the regulation of alcoholic beverages, there's a lot that goes into the marketing and the advertising of those. And there's actually some very specific laws that are pretty widely varied depending on what state you're in as far as how you can market those, and those are the tied-house laws. Can you give us a little bit of a breakdown on what are tied-house laws? You hear about it, but I don't think a lot of people really know what that is or what the implication of those are.

Jonathan Bing [\(22:51\)](#):

And these are the things that, especially when we represent foreign clients, that they're mystified by how we have things like this. It's so unique to the United States. So, tied-house laws were developed when we came out of prohibition in 1933, and there was a lot of concern that there was going to be monopolies in the alcohol industry, that you would have a company that would manufacture the product, sell the product, and also, retail the product. And they did not want to have one entity controlling the three-tiered system of alcohol delivery, which three-tiered meaning manufacturing, wholesaling, and retail.

[\(23:25\)](#):

So, every state developed some version of a law that said, "You cannot have more than one tier of the alcohol production process." And again, that's the world that was in 1933 without the expectation 100 later, that there would be multinational corporations that would be involved in this industry, and they would run into these tied-house... Especially, say, like New York, which is there's no de minimis that if you're a manufacturer anywhere in the world, you cannot get a retail license in the state of New York.

And there are ways around that which we will talk about, but every state has a version of that. And it also applies to sponsorships and advertising.

[\(24:01\)](#):

New York, the regulations, first, they say, "If we don't give specific approval for it, you can't do it." And then, they give really very specific examples about how much in terms of paraphernalia you can give out, in terms of T-shirts, and keychains, and bottle openers, and all that. But again, a very 20th century view of the world that the things that you were going to be promoting were going to be keychains, T-shirts. Now, we're talking about things that nobody had thought about before. For instance, celebrity sponsorships. If you have a celebrity with a tequila brand and he shows up at an event promoting the alcohol, the New York regulations say, "Anything of value is something that is potentially prohibited."

[\(24:42\)](#):

Well, he's not selling the product. They might not be having a tasting or they may not be having any actual selling of the alcohol, but is the mere presence of a celebrity promoting a product something that is a value that needs to be regulated. So, that's the issue. So, in New York, it's very, very specific, very limited. So, we have international clients that are coming into New York expecting to sort of waltz into the retail market, and we have to say, "No, you need to get an exemption." And in New York, we have a specific way of getting exemption, which is through a legislative exemption. A bill gets introduced and exempts the property where the entity that gives rise to the tied-house law is seeking to get a retail license and basically says, "The law does not exist on this plot of land," and allows it to move forward.

[\(25:29\)](#):

But it's a challenge, especially for international clients that are coming into New York that never have heard about this, don't understand why we have it, and we have to walk them through, either they may need to restructure or get an exemption just to be able to get the restaurant that they had expected would not be an issue.

Justin Prochnow [\(25:46\)](#):

And from the advertising perspective, this is something for me doing marketing and advertising law for others like Ed Chansky in our Las Vegas office, who I know advises companies on specific advertising rules around tied-house laws. It's a big deal. And as you said, celebrity sponsorships, you have a country singer who's got a concert, but he also has an alcoholic seltzer, and can he promote that at the concert and also at, as you said, make an appearance at a local retail store, and does that come in violation of the tied-house laws in that particular state where they happen to be doing it? These are big things that need to be looked at before-

Jonathan Bing [\(26:30\)](#):

The funny thing is that cannabis, which is again, another area where there's been great expansion, it actually is easier to advertise cannabis than it is to advertise alcohol because cannabis does not have prohibitory laws that the laws are currently based on. So, we have clients that, say, either want to have a cannabis company sponsor an event and we advise them that we have a... Lynelle Bosworth in our Albany office advises them. And there's a lot more flexibility and freedom for a cannabis company, even though cannabis is still illegal federally. For them, sponsoring an event compared to a liquor manufacturing company that will have very specific limitations on what they can do. So, even though cannabis is illegal on a federal basis, they can do more advertising and more specific advertising than a lot of alcohol manufacturers.

Justin Prochnow ([27:17](#)):

The issues with hemp, and CBD, and cannabis continue to fluctuate, and especially in the current administration, which I would say is probably more pro-cannabis, hemp, CBD than maybe some of the previous administrations. It'll be interesting to see how that continues to change. It continues to get more varied from state to state, which always creates some issues. Working with a bunch of the CBD and hemp companies, having packaging and labeling for products that is compliant on a 50-state basis is virtually impossible because you even have some states who say things like, "You have to declare the percentage of THC in the product." And then, you have other states who say, "You may not make a statement about the percentage of THC if it's zero." And then, so if you have zero THC in some states, you're specifically directed to declare that. And in some states, you're specifically not allowed to declare it. And so, it's always difficult when you have different laws in different states and trying to comply. Especially if you're trying to sell products across the country, it can get very difficult.

([28:27](#)):

One of the things I wanted to cover quickly, we talked about it a little on the last episode of the podcast. Hopefully, those of you listening got a chance to listen to our January podcast where we had nine different people from the food and beverage group talking about things coming up in 2026. I talked about a little bit at the end about GRAS, ingredients that are generally recognized as safe, and this is applicable to alcoholic beverages too. We work a lot in conjunction with some people trying to get products and trying to add new ingredients to either beer or other types of products. And of course, we're seeing protein now being a big ingredient in everything from popcorn to pretzels.

([29:09](#)):

We're getting ready to head out to Expo West next month, the biggest natural products expo. And last year, it was all about protein and GLP-1-friendly types of claims, and now we're seeing people wanting to sell beer with protein, and beer with creatine, and all of these different ingredients. The administration's focus on revamping the GRAS process... And in fact, RFK Jr. just was on 60 Minutes talking about this last week. There's continuing to be a focus on tightening up what ingredients can be allowed in different types of products, and we're going to see that bleed over into the alcoholic beverage side of things as well, because in order to legally use ingredients in an alcoholic beverage, they have to follow the similar requirements of being an approved food additive or a GRAS. And as FDA continues to tighten up on the process for establishing those as GRAS, that's going to affect companies potentially wanting to add these new ingredients to alcoholic beverage products as well. So, stay tuned for that and what's happening, because that's going to continue to be a big topic in 2026.

Jonathan Bing ([30:18](#)):

And I think that's where a firm like ours could be particularly helpful because, again, we do the basic liquor license work, but we also, again, in terms of having government law and lobbyists in states where in order to get that product approved, it may take having to go to the legislature or having to go to the State Liquor Authority commissioners to get the okay on that. Again, we're uniquely positioned to help for those complicated legal questions because not only do we have the ability to do the applications and get things done on the local level, we also have the ability to go to the executive, and then, legislative branches on the statewide level to advance issues like that.

Justin Prochnow ([30:56](#)):

It's a great point. Speaking of 2026 and things coming up, anything that you see on the horizon during 2026 that's going to be of interest or effect to this kind of area of law?

Jonathan Bing ([31:09](#)):

Well, in New York, there is always an effort to modernize the alcohol laws in small and sometimes large ways. The governor, in her proposed budget, included a provision that would allow manufacturers to have up to three retail licenses in New York, as basically an exception to the tied-house law. That would help, I think, particularly large-scale manufacturers not have to get us to get, I think, a tie... Metes and bounds exemption for their property, which just allowed them to apply in the normal course. So, I think that's important. As we talked about, I think more and more non-traditional entities coming into the retail liquor market and looking for ways in and facing the challenges of that, I think is important and it's happening. And I think efforts just to make it a little bit easier for companies to do business in this area. I think you will see that as well, so always will be challenges.

([32:02](#)):

This is not something that AI will be able to do for you because in order to submit your application to the SLA for a license, you still have to overnight it to a post office box in Philadelphia, and then, it gets put on a van or a truck, and those then gets driven to Albany. So, then you can't submit applications online. So, we will still have work to do as human beings in this line of work, especially in New York. I think that you will be seeing more and more different types of companies and stronger efforts to try to make it a little bit easier to do business in New York.

Justin Prochnow ([32:34](#)):

Thanks so much, Jonathan, for sharing the new breakout of the liquor licensing group. Again, it's been here for a while, but to have this as more of an official platform I think will really help. Again, the compliment between the liquor licensing group, the restaurant group, and the food and beverage group overall is a great way to help all the companies here in the industry. So, we appreciate you coming on the pod today and telling us about it.

Jonathan Bing ([33:04](#)):

Great. I really enjoyed it, and thanks for having me.

Justin Prochnow ([33:06](#)):

All right, well, thanks, everyone, for listening. If you enjoyed it, please like it or otherwise acknowledge it on your various social media platforms. And if it wasn't for you, remember the motto, "Silence is golden." All right, thanks, everyone. See you next episode.