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Dan Aykroyd says U.S. ban could kill Crystal Head Vodka

The actor said new restrictions on Canadian alcohol imports threaten jobs and could force his Toronto company to operate at a loss.

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Dan Aykroyd said Wednesday that new U.S. restrictions on Canadian alcohol imports are threatening his vodka company and the jobs tied to it, adding a business voice to a fast-growing trade dispute between the United States and Canada.

In an interview with CNN, the actor and entrepreneur said President Donald Trump’s move against Canadian alcohol is putting severe pressure on Crystal Head Vodka, the Toronto-based brand he co-founded in 2008. Aykroyd said the company now faces a

choice between shutting down parts of its operation, laying off workers and ending business partnerships, or continuing to operate at a loss.

The Trump administration announced on Sept. 8 that it would ban imports of Canadian beer, wine and spirits, and the measure took effect Tuesday. The administration said the action was retaliation for what it called Canada's "discriminatory treatment" of U.S. alcohol.

The restrictions reach well beyond one celebrity-backed brand. A coalition representing 59 U.S. alcohol and hospitality groups has warned that the policy could disrupt supply chains, reduce consumer choice and raise costs for American bars, restaurants and retailers. If the restrictions remain in place, importers and hospitality businesses may have to rework purchasing plans and pricing across a market that relies on steady cross-border shipments of wine, beer and spirits.

That matters for the beverage sector because the measure covers bottled and packaged alcohol from Canada, including wine, and could alter how distributors, stores and restaurants source products in the U.S. market. A prolonged disruption could affect margins for importers and wholesalers and may lead to higher prices or fewer Canadian labels on shelves and drink menus.

Some products are exempt. Canadian whiskey and liqueurs shipped in containers larger than four liters can still enter the U.S. market under the current rules. But that carveout does little for Crystal Head Vodka, whose signature skull-shaped bottles are sold in sizes of three liters and smaller.

Crystal Head is owned by Globefill Inc., a Toronto company in which Aykroyd is the majority owner and a co-founder. He told CNN that the restrictions could "kill" the brand if they stay in place, and said the fallout would spread to U.S. distributors and retailers that have built a market for the product.

Aykroyd said Crystal Head has business partners in several states, including New Jersey, Texas, Illinois, Missouri, Virginia, Ohio and Pennsylvania. He said those companies would lose the margins they earn from selling the vodka, which he described as a premium product with strong customer recognition. He also singled out

Indianapolis as an especially strong market for the brand and said sales there could disappear under the current rules.

His comments highlight how the dispute could hurt both sides of the border. Canadian producers face the loss of access to a major export market, while U.S. hospitality businesses that depend on those imports may be left with fewer products to sell. For restaurants, bars and liquor retailers, even a short interruption can create gaps in inventory, changes in ordering patterns and pressure to replace familiar brands with more expensive or less popular options.

Aykroyd also referred to the wider trade fight in tariff terms. He said Crystal Head would be willing to absorb duties in the range of 10% to 15%, but called a 50% tariff punitive and unsustainable. His remarks reflected the confusion and uncertainty many businesses face as the trade measures expand and companies try to understand which products are banned, which are exempt and what costs they may still be expected to bear.

Even as he criticized the policy, Aykroyd struck a conciliatory tone toward Trump and said he still believes the dispute can be resolved. He urged direct talks between Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and suggested the two leaders meet in Canada to negotiate face to face. He also said he would be willing to supply vodka for the opening of Trump’s planned White House ballroom if the trade fight is settled.

The dispute comes at a sensitive moment in U.S.-Canada relations. The two countries have one of the largest and most integrated trading relationships in the world, and alcohol is one of many sectors where supply chains cross the border. The current restrictions have turned a long-running policy disagreement into a direct commercial problem for producers, distributors and hospitality operators on both sides.

For Aykroyd, the issue is personal as well as financial. He said he has spent years building relationships with U.S. partners and customers and now sees those ties at risk because of a political fight far larger than his company. He told CNN he remains hopeful that the two governments will find a way to reach a deal and reopen the market before the damage becomes permanent.