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U.S. Spirits Group Urges Trump to Lift 10% Tariff on French Cognac

DISCUS says the levy on cognac and some European liqueurs is raising costs for importers, bars and retailers.

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The U.S. spirits industry is pressing President Donald Trump to remove the 10% tariff on French cognac and European liqueurs, arguing that the duty is raising costs for importers, squeezing bars and retailers, and hurting consumers.

The push intensified Monday, when the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, known as DISCUS, said producers and importers had gathered signatures for an appeal to the White House. The group asked the administration to reconsider the tariff, which it said was imposed last year during a broader trade dispute.

In a letter to the administration, DISCUS said the levy is disrupting a business that depends on steady flows of imported products and predictable pricing. The group said the tariff has contributed to a sharp decline in sales of affected imported spirits. It also said many bars and stores have been forced either to charge more or to carry fewer products.

The industry group argued that the effects are not limited to overseas brands. According to DISCUS, the tariff is also putting pressure on U.S. companies that import, distribute, market, and sell those products. That includes wholesalers, restaurant operators, and hospitality businesses that rely on premium spirits sales. The group warned that jobs tied to distribution and on-premise sales could be at risk if the tariff remains in place.

The appeal also reflects frustration within the industry that some other European spirits have already received tariff relief while cognac and certain liqueurs still face the 10% duty. The continued tariff on those categories has become a competitive issue for importers and retailers, especially in a market where consumers can switch to products that are not carrying the same added cost.

That matters across the beverage business because cognac and imported liqueurs are important categories for liquor stores, restaurants, hotel bars, and distributors. Higher import costs can affect shelf prices, profit margins, and product selection. If the tariff stays in place, it could weaken the position of key European spirits in the U.S. market and reshape how sellers allocate inventory and promotions.

Opponents of the tariff say the policy is producing consequences that go beyond trade negotiations. Instead of targeting foreign producers alone, they argue, the duty is also landing on American businesses and drinkers who buy or serve those imports. Importers have said the extra cost is difficult to absorb in a market where consumers are already sensitive to higher prices.

The administration had not issued a public response to the industry’s request as of Monday. The White House also had not said whether it is reviewing the tariff or considering a broader change in spirits trade policy.

The dispute comes as the spirits industry continues to press for stable trade rules after several years of tariff battles that have affected transatlantic alcohol sales. For U.S. importers, the issue is not only the 10% duty itself but the uncertainty it creates for ordering, pricing, and long-term supplier relationships. Companies that buy cognac and European liqueurs often plan purchases months in advance, and shifts in tariff policy can alter those decisions quickly.

DISCUS said it wants a swift resolution to prevent further market disruption. The group described the spirits business as an important part of the U.S. economy and said continued tariffs on these products are making it harder for companies across the supply chain to plan for the coming sales seasons.