



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brad Hoylman-Sigal

## Elected Officials Call on SantaCon to Adopt Good-Neighbor Principles

[BRAD HOYLMAN-SIGAL](#) December 12, 2015

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NEW YORK – Today, State Senator Brad Hoylman, along with City Comptroller Scott Stringer, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, State Senators Adriano Espaillat, Liz Krueger and Daniel Squadron, Assembly Members Deborah Glick, Richard Gottfried and Linda Rosenthal, and Council Members Daniel Garodnick, Corey Johnson and Rosie Mendez sent letters to SantaCon and the New York State Liquor Authority (SLA) calling for greater

oversight and accountability in an effort to rein in the annual pub crawl.

The coalition of lawmakers, building on similar efforts in 2013 and 2014, proposed a set of guiding principles for SantaCon's organizers, including better coordination with officials, greater accountability on the part of the organizers, and stronger efforts to mitigate risks to pedestrians. SantaCon, an annual bar-crawl that draws thousands of participants dressed as Santa Claus, regularly draws the ire of local residents and law enforcement for its disruptive effect on local communities as well as its perceived threat to public safety.

"SantaCon needs to grow up," **said State Senator Brad Hoylman.** "An organization that brings over 25,000 people to our neighborhoods should show us respect by sharing its routes with community boards and local elected officials and working together with us well in advance to determine how we can mitigate the negative impacts of this bar crawl on our local communities and small retail businesses, whose annual sales depend heavily on this time of year."

The local officials also reached out to SLA Chairman Vincent G. Bradley, urging the agency to take a "proactive approach" to this year's event by reminding participating licensees to be mindful of potential violations and committing additional inspectors along the route to ensure adherence to local regulations.

December 7, 2015

SantaCon

Delivered via Electronic Mail

[santa@santacon.nyc](mailto:santa@santacon.nyc)

To Whom It May Concern:

For a third year, we write to express our concerns regarding the annual SantaCon bar crawl and the negative impact it has on the residential communities where it takes place. Each holiday season, local elected officials, community boards and local precincts face a wave of complaints as the SantaCon bar crawl passes through their neighborhoods. This year, we are again hoping to take preemptive action.

We appreciate that the SantaCon bar crawl can provide additional short-term sales to a small group of local business establishments. However, we also recognize that the event's many adverse effects significantly disrupt the quality of life of entire communities. While the SantaCon bar crawl has pledged to take proactive steps in the past, the organization's efforts have not mitigated the bulk of the event's deleterious impact. There is still more that can and must be done to ensure that the event is positive and safe.

Previously, we requested that the SantaCon bar crawl adhere to a set of common-sense principles. We urge you to agree to a similar set of guidelines this year in anticipation of the event's 2015 iteration. The three principles are as follows:

Share defined routes with the community – The SantaCon bar crawl's path often comes as an unwelcome and last minute surprise to community members, the NYPD, and local businesses. We ask that the SantaCon bar crawl make its routes and timetable publicly available far in advance in order to give all of these stakeholders time to adequately plan for the arrival of SantaCon bar crawl participants.

Ensure responsible participant behavior – While the police can certainly play a role in ensuring SantaCon bar crawl participants abide by laws regarding public intoxication and

urination and overly aggressive behavior, the NYPD is responsible for serving the public at large rather than providing security for a private event. The SantaCon bar crawl's organizers must make a concerted effort to self-police at establishments along the route and should expel overly intoxicated and badly-behaving participants.

Mitigate pedestrian safety risks – The Santacon bar crawl's participants often overwhelm sidewalks that were designed to accommodate smaller crowds, posing serious safety concerns for participants and other pedestrians. The SantaCon bar crawl should identify opportunities to reduce these risks. For example, staff members or trained volunteers can be present along the route to ensure the free-flow of pedestrian travel and to prevent individuals from walking into busy vehicular traffic.

With the date of the event rapidly approaching, we urge the SantaCon bar crawl to act swiftly to adopt these guidelines and make its programmatic and safety plans public.

December 7, 2015

Vincent G. Bradley

Chairman

New York State Liquor Authority

80 South Swan Street, 9th Floor

Albany, NY 12210-8002

Dear Chairman Bradley:

As we approach the holiday season, we write to request that the New York State Liquor Authority (“SLA”) take a proactive approach to the seasonal bar crawl known as SantaCon, which we understand will be held on December 12, 2015. If the recent past is any indication, we have ample reason to be concerned that participating SLA licensees could violate the terms of their SLA licenses and the New York State Alcohol Beverage Control Law (the “ABC Law”). As a result, we request the following:

First, we urge the SLA to remind licensees that may be taking part in the SantaCon bar crawl of all applicable rules, regulations and laws, particularly those relating to drink specials (ABC Law, Section 117-a) and serving visibly intoxicated and underage persons (ABC Law, Section 65).

Second, we request that the SLA dedicate additional inspectors along the route of the SantaCon bar crawl and that licensees be put on notice of this fact.

Third, as you have done in the past, we request that you coordinate your efforts with local NYPD precincts and inform local community boards and elected officials of the steps you have taken to ensure that the SantaCon bar crawl has minimal interruption and quality of life impact on the neighborhoods in Manhattan along the crawl route.

When left unregulated, the bar crawl has widespread negative effects on the local community, with complaints including but not limited to public consumption of alcohol, public intoxication, public urination, and disorderly and aggressive behavior.

Please see the full release [here](#).