

Nashville's New Regulation of Transportainment: Are the Days of Seeing Drunk Bachelorette Parties on a Tractor At 11 AM Over?

Anyone who has been to Nashville recently has seen a “transportainment” vehicle on the streets—they are everywhere, in many variations. Almost all-day Thursday through Sunday, pedal taverns, party buses, the Nashville Wagon, “Hell on Wheels” tanks, tractors, and even hot tubs traverse the streets of Nashville, full of loud drunken people out to have a good time. Although the small businesses within this “transportainment” industry argue to “let the good times roll,” the good times seemed to screech to a halt on October 19, 2021, when the Nashville Metro Council voted 33-3 to pass BL2021-911, a bill that places regulations on “transportainment” vehicles.¹

The regulations require that operators of a transportainment vehicle obtain a permit from the city and be regulated by Metro’s Transportation Licensing Commission (which would include driver training and route approval).² Further, and a much more devastating blow to the transportainment industry, there is now a ban on alcohol service in uncovered or unenclosed vehicles that will take effect on December 1, 2021.³ Given that this will be a huge blow to the transportainment industry, it is hardly a surprise that the owners of party vehicles joined together on October 26 in a “Don’t Lose the Booze” demonstration against the new regulations.⁴

Michael Winters, the President of the Nashville Transportainment Association, felt especially frustrated with the regulations, and argues that the noise and drunken behavior on the buses are nothing in comparison to the bars on lower Broadway.⁵ “They are using the facade that we are working together in building regulations when the reality is, they are just trying to

¹ [Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN - File #: BL2021-911 \(legistar.com\)](#)

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ [Party vehicles demonstrate in response to new regulations | News | mainstreet-nashville.com](#)

⁵ [Nashville passes first regulations for transportainment vehicles | WKRN News 2](#)

annihilate something they chose to all of a sudden don't like," claimed Winters.⁶ While Winters stated that he willing to work to find a common ground with the City, he is also ready to take legal action against the bill if necessary.⁷

The new regulations were in response to a growing frustration and nervousness of many Nashville residents with the party vehicles. Students at the downtown Hume Fogg High School held a press conference explaining the vocal, and sometimes physical, harassment they endure when rowdy buses drive by the school.⁸ People who work in Downtown Nashville complain that they have trouble getting to work and completing work while there are drunken Bachelorettes screaming "Man! I Feel Like a Woman" outside of their office window is no easy task.⁹ City officials were also concerned that, since routes of the vehicles were unregulated, the party bus experience would spread to disturb other Nashville neighborhoods and residents outside of the downtown area.¹⁰ Perhaps the most important driving factor behind these regulations, however, was safety. In June of 2021, a man was sitting on the railing of an uncovered party bus and fell out, face first. After hitting the ground, the bus ran over the man's legs.¹¹ Although his injuries were non-life threatening, it was an omen for what could come next without sufficient regulations.

Although the party buses in Nashville assuredly have their problems, it seems somewhat sad to picture a Nashville without transportainment vehicles (say what you want about them, but they are fantastic for people-watching). The transportainment industry's right to party may just

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*; [🎵 107.5 The River | Nashville: Live Life. Love Music. \(iheart.com\)](https://www.iheart.com/playlist/107.5-The-River-Nashville-Live-Life-Love-Music/)

⁹ [Nashville City Council Passes Ordinance Banning Alcohol On Party Buses \(whiskeyriff.com\)](https://www.whiskeyriff.com/news/nashville-city-council-passes-ordinance-banning-alcohol-on-party-buses/)

¹⁰ [Nashville Party Buses Facing New Legislation - Tennessee Star](https://www.tennesseestar.com/news/nashville-party-buses-facing-new-legislation/) (worried about the "[permanent erosion] of the cultural character of Nashville's neighborhoods.")

¹¹ *Id.*

live on, however, because the bill's author, Freddie O'Connell, announced that he intends to file another bill that would establish a permitting process for "bring your own beverage" scenarios and potentially even permits that would allow for alcohol service and sales on vehicles—all before the regulations go into effect on December 1st.¹² So it is not time to hang your cowboy hat up quite yet—transportainment may live on: it will just be a quieter, safer, and more contained version of the transportainment we have all come to know (and love?).

Summary: In October of 2021, Nashville passed a bill that places new regulations upon the Transportainment industry. These regulations included a ban of alcohol on unenclosed party vehicles, and the controversial ban has resulted in a fight between the City and the small businesses that make up the transportainment industry.

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¹² [Tennessee regulators accuse Nashville Tractor of illegal alcohol sales \(tennessean.com\)](https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/politics/2021/10/28/tennessee-regulators-accuse-nashville-tractor-of-illegal-alcohol-sales/7711170002/)