

LABEL REGISTRATION

Federal approval is not permission to sell



WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

PP 2-3 What a federal yes buys you

PP 4-5 Where the yeses get lost

PP 6-7 What a wall changes

P 8 How do I start?

BONUS Shop-floor facts



PREPARED FOR
NEW ENGLAND PRODUCTION BREWERIES

FIFTY SEPARATE YESES

What a federal yes buys you

A federal label approval clears in about a day now. It arrives as a certificate, it goes in the folder, and everyone moves on — because it is the approval that gets talked about, and because it feels like the end of something.

It is not. A federal certificate answers exactly one question, and it is not the question a distributor asks on a Friday afternoon. Every

state registers brands separately, on its own form, at its own fee, on its own renewal cycle, and none of them are waiting on Washington to tell them what to do.

So the folder grows faster than the wall does. Approvals accumulate at federal speed and permissions accumulate at fifty different state speeds, and the gap between those two rates is where a shipment goes wrong.

THE NUMBERS

A modest lineup of ten year-round and seasonal brands, sold across a twelve-state regional footprint, is a hundred and twenty separate registrations — each with its own expiry.

WORTH KNOWING

Federal approval turnaround has shortened considerably in recent years. State registration timelines have not moved with it, so the two have drifted further apart, not closer together.

THE TAKEAWAY

The question is never “is this label approved”. It is “which states already said yes, and can I prove it before the truck loads”.



STAMPS & STATES

Ours is a spreadsheet.

SHOP-FLOOR FACT: THE INBOX State confirmations arrive as email. An inbox is a fine place to receive a document and a poor place to keep one — which is how a current registration becomes unfindable.

THE FRIDAY PROBLEM

Where the yeses get lost

Nobody in the building believes a federal certificate is permission to sell. Ask anyone on the floor and they will tell you the states register separately. The problem is not belief — it is retrieval.

On a Friday afternoon, with a truck loading, the question is narrow and immediate: can this brand ship to this state today. Answering it

means finding a specific document, issued by a specific authority, that has not lapsed. The people who can answer it are rarely the people standing at the dock.

Renewals make it worse, because they arrive silently. A registration does not announce its own expiry. The first signal is usually a distributor asking a question that should have had an easy answer.

THE NUMBERS

Each state sets its own renewal period, fee and notice requirement. Knowing one of them well tells you nothing reliable about the other forty-nine.

WORTH KNOWING

A filled cell on a wall means a document exists behind it. An empty cell means nobody has checked — which is a different thing from a no, and worth keeping separate.

THE TAKEAWAY

The wall is not paperwork. It is the shortest path between a question at the dock and a document in a folder.



Archaeology is generous.

SHOP-FLOOR FACT: THE RENEWAL Lapses do not send warnings. The wall carries the expiry date beside every yes, so renewal season stops being an archaeology project.

EVERY STEP IS NAMED

And the last one is a person

1

IT READS

Your COLA certificates, your state filings and the spreadsheet you already keep. It organises what exists; it does not ask you to re-enter it.

2

IT CHECKS

Every brand against every state, and the document and date sitting behind each yes.

3

IT PRINTS

The wall. Filled where a real registration exists, empty where nobody has checked — and those two are never merged.

4

A PERSON SHIPS

Approving a load stays a human call. The wall shows the state of play and then stops.

IF A DOCUMENT IS MISSING

The cell stays empty and says so. Empty means unverified, never 'probably fine' and never 'no'.

IF A DATE IS UNCLEAR

It flags the registration for confirmation rather than assuming the renewal went through.

IF IT IS SIMPLY WRONG

You see it on the wall before the truck loads, because reading the wall is the step before loading.

WHAT IT CANNOT DO

File a registration, pay a fee, contact a state authority, or release a shipment.

“Washington says yes once. Every state says yes separately.”

ON THE RECORD, OFF THE LOT: Russ Cobb is a character from the Mr. Wilson field film — written from the brewing dive and played by an actor. A composite of what the research found. Not a client, and not a customer testimonial.



Russ Cobb

BREWER BY TRADE, COMPLIANCE BY ACCIDENT

How fast is federal now?

— About a day a label. That part got easy, and honestly that is the part that fooled us.

So you are clear to sell?

— No. A federal certificate answers one question, and it is not the question the distributor asks.

Where does the record live?

— A spreadsheet and an inbox. Mostly the inbox, which is a fine place to receive a document and a poor place to keep one.

What goes wrong?

— A truck loads on a Friday and nobody in the building can prove that state already said yes.



AND FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DESK

“The wall shows you what is true today. Deciding to load the truck is still a person's job, and it stays a person's job.”

MRS. WILSON · SHE RUNS THE SHOP · ALSO A CHARACTER

SO HOW DO I ACTUALLY START?

The audit is free and it reads your own filings. Here is what a label wall does once it is running:

- 1 Reads your records** Your COLA certificates, your state filings, your spreadsheet. It organises what you already have.
- 2 One grid, one glance** Brands down the side, states across the top, and a filled cell only where a real document sits.
- 3 Dates beside every yes** Renewals are visible before they pass, not discovered after.
- 4 Leaves you the wall** Every brand and size, legal-to-sell position visible in one read. Approving a load stays a human call.

One fix at a time. You keep the keys.

MRWILSON.TECH



The Label Wall · prepared for New England production breweries · research dated 2026-08-16 · trade-level guide; no named client, no private data, and no figure this shop has not measured. Quotes are from the Mr. Wilson field film.