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## Judge sides with SF club in ABC crackdown

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**The state crackdown on SF clubs has Prohibition Era echoes, but this time it's using arcane rules to mask its moral concerns.**

In the wake of a judge's ruling that state officials were improperly enforcing arbitrary rules in cracking down on the Great American Music Hall and other San Francisco venues, the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control has dropped its case against GAMH.

The decision comes after a Guardian report in June [1] about how the ABC was using strange and irrelevant legal technicalities to go after such venerable San Francisco nightlife hotspots at GAMH, Slim's, Bottom of the Hill, DNA Lounge, and other assorted nightclubs.

Unfortunately, the ABC is expressing defiance as it continues what some believe is a moral crusade by conservative bureaucrats hostile to San Francisco values. The agency wrote in a press release: "The Administrative Law Judge held that while Great American Music Hall had in fact changed its operation, the regulation relied upon by the ABC was ambiguous. While ABC does not agree with the Administrative Law Judge's ruling, and has not accepted the proposed decision, it has decided to dismiss the action against the Great American Music Hall."

But GAMH attorney John Hinman told the San Francisco Chronicle [2] that he hopes the ruling will encourage the agency to back off of the other clubs as well: "There's no reason to move them forward."

- [Steven T. Jones](#)

### Links:

[1] [http://www.sfbg.com/entry.php?entry\\_id=8752](http://www.sfbg.com/entry.php?entry_id=8752)

[2] <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/09/30/BAUB19UGOU.DTL>