

# Feds, state target caffeinated alcohol drinks

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The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is poised to declare unsafe a slew of caffeinated alcoholic drinks that are popular among the college set — including Four Loko and Joose — a move that could lead to an outright ban, Sen. Charles Schumer said yesterday.

The agency may issue the ruling as soon as today.

That announcement dovetails with another anticipated action

by the Federal Trade Commission to notify manufacturers of the drinks that they may be illegally marketing dangerous products, Schumer said.

“Let these rulings serve as a warning to anyone who tried to peddle dangerous and toxic brews to our children,” Schumer (D-N.Y.) said in a statement. “Do it and we will shut you down.”

The products have been linked to incidents at Central Washington University in Washington state and Ramapo College in New Jersey, where stu-

dents had to be rushed to emergency rooms after drinking them. Some of the drinks contain up to 12 percent alcohol and high levels of stimulants.

Betsy Lordan, an FTC spokeswoman, declined to comment yesterday. FDA officials could not be reached.

The moves will come on the heels of an agreement between the New York State Liquor Authority and the state’s largest beer distributors to stop selling the drinks in New York.

That pact, announced last

weekend, requires beer distributors to stop placing orders for the drinks immediately. They will have until Dec. 10 to clear inventory, while retailers will have even more time to get rid of remaining stock on their shelves.

Dennis Rosen, chairman of the State Liquor Authority, said it had reached an agreement with Phusion Projects, which produces Four Loko, to stop shipping products that contain caffeine and other stimulants to the state by Friday.

Phusion Projects said in a

statement that it would “reformulate” its products without caffeine. “We have repeatedly contended — and still believe, as do many people throughout the country — that the combination of alcohol and caffeine is safe. If it were unsafe, popular drinks like rum and colas or Irish coffees that have been consumed safely and responsibly for years would face the same scrutiny that our products have recently faced,” said a statement by Phusion’s co-founders Chris Hunter, Jeff Wright and Jaisen Freeman.