



WINE AND SPIRITS WHOLESALERS OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

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TESTIMONY OF WINE AND SPIRITS WHOLESALERS OF CONNECTICUT

**Concerning: SB 926 An Act Concerning The Sale of Connecticut Wine At Farmers Markets, and
HB 6472 An Act Concerning Wine Festivals**

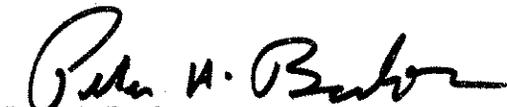
The language of Senate Bill 926 *An Act Concerning The Sale of Connecticut Wine At Farmers Markets* seeks to grant to “holders of a manufacturer permit or a manufacturer permit for a farm winery” permission to sell wine at a farmer’s market (emphasis added). The Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of Connecticut, Inc. does not oppose permitting farm wineries to sell wine produced by the farm winery at a farmer’s market, but does oppose granting such a privilege to a manufacturer. Under current law manufacturers are generally prohibited from selling directly to consumers and are required to distribute their products through the state controlled Three-tier System. In as much as Connecticut wholesalers are an integral component in the Three-tier System, the WSWC opposes any expansion of a manufacturer’s ability to circumvent that long established system of distribution. Accordingly, the WSWC suggests that the first sentence of the bill be amended to read as follows:

“Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter, the holder of a ~~manufacturer permit~~ or a manufacturer permit for a farm winery may sell wine manufactured in this state produced by the farm winery at a farmers' market operated on a not-for-profit basis in this state.”

The WSWC believes that this suggested change is supportive if the intent of the bill to provide additional exposure to Connecticut Farm Winery products, while at the same time protecting the interests of the members of the WSWC.

The WSWC does not oppose the portion of the language of House Bill 6472 *An Act Concerning Wine Festivals* (Section 1) which seeks to grant to the Connecticut Vineyard and Winery Association the opportunity to hold a single three day wine festival for Connecticut Farm Wineries. In fact this portion of the bill is similar to the accord struck between the WSWC and the CVWA during the last legislative session. The WSWC does, however, oppose the language in Section 2 which grants an unlimited number of permits to out-of-state entities to hold and profit from wine festivals within this state. While Section 2 of the proposed bill seeks to limit the granting of such a permit to a “charitable wine foundation”, an undefined term, it does not limit the participants from being profit making corporations. Additionally, there is no way to practically limit the over all number of such permits. In fact given the vast number of out-of-state wineries, it is conceivable that groups of different wineries could have different “charitable wine foundations” sponsor a wine festival on their behalf so that in effect there would be a wine festival each week. Such a result, while perhaps unlikely, was never previously contemplated. Given the complexity of limiting all out-of-state wineries to a single event, as is currently proposed for Connecticut Farm Wineries, the WSWC suggests that perhaps the best solution is to simply delete Section 2 from the bill.

Respectfully submitted,



Peter A. Berdon