



Connecticut
Vineyard &
Winery
Association

Testimony in Support of the following Bills:

Bill No. 926 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE OF CONNECTICUT WINE AT FARMERS' MARKETS.

Bill No. 6472 AN ACT CONCERNING WINE FESTIVALS.

Bill No. 6473 AN ACT EXPANDING THE HOURS OF OPERATION FOR FARM WINERIES.

Members of the General Law Committee, my name is Jamie Jones and my family owns the Jones Family Farms and Winery in Shelton. I am here today in my capacity as the President of the Connecticut Vineyard and Winery Association (CVWA). We are a private, non-profit association of twenty (20) farm wineries from around the state. Our goal is to promote the cultivation of grapes, spread awareness of the quality wines being produced in our state and market our businesses through the Connecticut Wine Trail brochure and our website. Together our farms comprise over 1500 acres of open space and our businesses received 500,000 visits from travelers searching for local wines. We are an important part of both Connecticut's beautiful landscape and local economy. I come before you today to voice our support for the following bills. Each of these bills will allow us to expand our sales of wine to more customers.

Currently underway is an exciting movement by people craving for locally produced products such as Connecticut grown wine. Farmer's markets have become a popular outlet for farmers to market their products to customers who cannot make it out to the farm. Many farms and wineries are located in rural settings, away from population centers and farmer's markets allow growers to bring their produce to convenient, easily accessible locations where people can shop for their weekly food needs. Unfortunately in Connecticut, wine has not been permitted to be sold in approved Department of Agriculture farmer's markets. Please consider following in the footsteps of other states such as New York, with their flourishing green markets and allow wine to be sold at farmer's markets.

In August of 2007 a Connecticut Wine Festival was held at the Farmington polo grounds. Several thousand guests attended, but were disappointed not to be able to purchase wine by the bottle. The festival was a good public relations event for our industry, but was not deemed an economic success because of inadequate sales through shipping. In 2008 a wine festival was not held. Please consider legislation enabling a Connecticut Wine Festival where wine can be sold by the bottle.

Current Connecticut state statute forces farm wineries to finish wine sales by 8 PM. However recent legislation extended the time of sales by liquor stores to 9 PM. During the summer and fall many wineries have events and hours that go into the early evening. Extending the wineries