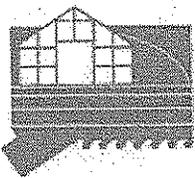


**Connecticut
Florists
Association**



**CONNECTICUT
GREENHOUSE
GROWERS
ASSOCIATION**



**Connecticut
Nursery &
Landscape
Association**

P.O. Box 415, Botsford, Connecticut 06404. Phone 800-562-0610. Fax 203-261-5429.

Statement of
Bob Heffernan
Executive Director
Connecticut Green Industries Council
before the
General Law Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
Supporting HB 6267 • The Sale of Wine With Gift Baskets

February 8, 2011

Several times each week — sometimes daily — consumers routinely ask their local florist or garden center, “Could you add a bottle of wine to that basket?” It could be a gift basket of flowers, or a fruit and gourmet basket, or a basket of plants and garden items.

Then the customer is surprised to learn that Connecticut state liquor laws do not allow the retailer to sell a gift basket containing wine or champagne. There’s no special liquor license for this.

There are an estimated more than 1,000 flower shops, garden centers, greenhouses and nurseries in Connecticut. They are very supportive of the concept behind H.B. 6267, which would finally allow them to provide this service to the people of Connecticut — and perhaps also to hundreds of thousands of others outside our state’s borders who daily call into the state to have something delivered to a friend, associate or loved one inside the state.

We believe a new gift basket permit could generate at least \$1million annually in new state permit fees and sales taxes associated with this new permit. We already know, from many years of disappointing our customers, that this new business item would be very popular with Connecticut residents.

We offer specific comments on H.B. 6267:

[1] Section 1(b) should contain a new item: “or (8) flowers, plants, and garden-related items.”

[2] We originally proposed that this new permit allow only Connecticut-produced wines, but if the Legislature votes to include all wine, that would be more than acceptable.

[3] We hope and expect that this permit would also include champagne in addition to wine.

Thank you.