



**GASOLINE & AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE  
DEALERS OF AMERICA, Inc.**

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**February 28, 2012**

Co-Chair Paul R. Doyle  
Co-Chair Joseph J. Taborsak  
Senator Kevin D. Witkos  
Representative Rosa C. Rebimbas

General Law Committee:

We are submitting testimony in **support of H.B. 5021**, AN ACT CONCERNING COMPETITIVE ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR PRICING AND HOURS OF OPERATION FOR PERMITTEES.

The Gasoline & Automotive Service Dealer's of America, Inc. (GASDA, Inc.) is a trade association whose members are responsible for pumping over 60% of the 1.4 billion gallons of gasoline sold in Connecticut annually. In addition, our members operate convenience stores, repairs shops, towing operations, car washes and body shops. GASDA has approximately 450 members and those members employ over 2500 employee's, but more important associate vendor companies working with GASDA members employ over 15,000 employee's servicing our members. These are all Connecticut based companies and employee's who's lively hoods are impacted daily by our members.

Section 7 of H.B. 5021 would allow c-stores to obtain a permit to sell beer. While we have some concerns regarding the language of this bill, it is our understanding that the Governor's office has now suggested some changes and we feel confident with the help of the General Law Committee to work in all changes needed we can support this bill. If passed, this section would increase competition among sellers of beer, provide more choices for consumers and allow c-stores to compete with stores located in Massachusetts and New York.

**GASDA** believes that H.B. 5021 should pass for the following reasons:

- **Consumer Choice** – Under the current law the government chooses the winners and losers by dictating who can and who cannot sell beer. Consumers should choose who they want to do business with and buy products from. H.B. 5021 allows for equal competition and provides consumers with choices.
- **Greater Competition** – Today the law restricts where beer can be sold. H.B. 5021 would add potential competitors to the marketplace who will fight to keep and gain new customers. When businesses compete – consumers win;
- **Increased Revenue to the State** – Last year, the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA) reported that S.B. 864 (which is similar to section 7 of H.B. 5021) would “result in a gain from the alcoholic beverage and sales taxes of \$1.7 million annually”. This means that the state can increase revenue without raising taxes.
- **Loss of Tax Revenue** - Most of New England and New York allow the sale of beer at convenience stores. Connecticut is at a competitive disadvantage because of this antiquated Blue law and suffers stat and local tax losses because of it.
- **Fair Competition** – Currently large chain grocery stores are and have been opening gasoline stations to retail gasoline in direct competition with our members. Likewise, package liquor stores sell lottery, candy, cigarettes and small snack items, again in direct completion with our members. Why are convenience stores who sell gasoline then prohibited from selling beer, while there competition can sell what gasoline convenience store sell. This is fundamentally unfair and this bill will level the playing field!

GASDA request that the General Law Committee to **support H.B. 5021**, AN ACT CONCERNING COMPETITIVE ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR PRICING AND HOURS OF OPERATION FOR PERMITTEES, and allow for greater competition among beer retailers within our state, enhanced consumer choice, the ability to compete c-stores in Massachusetts and New York who sell beer.

This legislation helps businesses, consumers and the state.

Respectfully,

*Michael J. Fox*

Michael J. Fox  
Executive Director