

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 6540, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE
OF CERTAIN BEVERAGES IN MIXED MATERIAL CONTAINERS**

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Good morning Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile and members of the Environment Committee. My name is Dwayne Kratt and I am the senior director for state government affairs at Diageo. I work with roughly 650 colleagues at our North American headquarters which is located in Norwalk, CT. Diageo is a leading player in the alcohol beverage industry with premium brands in all three categories: beer, wine and spirits.

I am here today to testify in strong support of House Bill 6540, An Act Concerning the Sale of Certain Beverages in Mixed Material Containers. HB 6540 authorizes the sale of malted beverages in containers that are composed of one or more plastics and that also include aluminum or steel.

This bill would allow my company to sell malt based pouch products in the State of Connecticut. Currently, Connecticut is the only state in the country that prohibits this packaging for malt based products. Pouch packaging is very common. Visit any grocery store; you will notice that this kind of packaging is used for many, many products, including sauces, juices, pecans, laundry detergent, cookies, pretzels, various cleaning products and so on.

In fact, you even can buy other alcohol beverages products in pouches. Specifically, you can buy – in Connecticut – spirit products and wine products in pouches. HB 6540 would even be playing field among the various categories of alcohol.

The pouch packaging is light, durable and flexible. It also has a smaller carbon footprint compared to other packaging due to its light weight. For our malt beverage product purposes, this packaging allows us to provide to legal drinking age consumers a value added proposition of frozen drinks without any hassles.

H.B. 6540 would amend a law that was passed in the early 1980s. We think the law was passed then to prevent packaging that would interfere with the container deposit recycling stream. Of course, single stream recycling technology has eliminated this problem.

I am very grateful that the Environment Committee has raised this bill. I would like to propose two modifications to the current version. First, I propose that the legislation exempt beer as well as malt based product. It is a meaningless distinction: both are malt beverages. While I am not

aware of any plans to put beer in a pouch, the distinction would only cause confusion. Second, I propose that HB 6540 be effective upon passage.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Connecticut beer wholesalers and my industry colleagues who also support this legislation. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Thank you.