

**Jamie Jones- President of CT Vineyard & Winery Association
Testimony Before the a General Law Committee
February 26, 2013
In Support of SB 881 An Act Concerning Farm Wineries**

Good Afternoon Senator Doyle and Representative Baram, my name is Jamie Jones and I am a sixth generation farmer. My family has been farming for more than 160 years in Shelton. We currently grow strawberries, blueberries, pumpkins, Christmas trees and grapes across 400 acres. I established our winery, the Jones Winery, ten years ago and we currently produce about 4,000 cases and host over 10,000 visitors to our tasting room each year.

I serve as president of the Connecticut Vineyard and Winery Association. The Connecticut Vineyard and Winery Association consists of 24 farm wineries, spread across the state that market ourselves collectively as the Connecticut Wine Trail. The purpose of our association is to promote the cultivation of grapes and the production of wine in Connecticut. I also was appointed and currently serve on the Connecticut Farm Wine Development Council.

I am here to request that a change be made to the language of the Farm Winery Act. Currently a seven year exemption exists from the requirement that 25% of the fruit come from the permittee's premise. This language exists to help new wineries become established during the initial years of vineyard establishment. We have come to recognize that the seven year exemption can be reset if the permittee changes. Therefore any change of permittee between family members or formation of another legal entity will reset this clock. In essence, a Connecticut farm winery by making these ownership changes would not have to harvest any crop and still remain legally licensed indefinitely. I cannot imagine this was the original intent of the legislation. Changing the language to attach the seven year exemption to the property itself will prevent such an event from happening.