HB 5430 An Act Permitting Restaurant and Café Permit Holders to Sell Growlers of Beer at Retail

Good afternoon! My name is Phil Barnett and I am one of the owners of the Hartford Restaurant Group (Wood-n-Tap, Agave Grill and TD Homers Grill). I am speaking in support of House Bill 5430, An Act Permitting Restaurant and Café Permit Holders to Sell Growlers of Beer at Retail establishments.

With the trend to SUPPORT LOCAL, this is the next step in the process. The same consumers who have propelled the food industry trends toward organic agriculture and artisanal techniques have also embraced small, independent brewers. Currently, Connecticut allows the filling of growlers only at brewery sites and restaurants that brew their own beer. With the current bill proposed this would allow restaurant and café permit holders the ability to sell "craft" draught beer directly to their guests. This would allow consumers better access to products from Connecticut and around the country in a way that has not been available to them. The change in the law makes sense for consumer freedom of choice and the growth of the microbrew industry. Currently many other states along with a couple of our neighboring states (NY & NJ) have already adapted similar standards.

In addition to giving the consumer what they want it's also GREEN!

- Growlers can be reused multiple times (eliminating packaging waste is part of their appeal)
- Kegs that dispense the beer are cleaned and reused over a 100 times.
- Dispensing of beer from keg to growler (current technology allows restaurant/café establishments to make their own gas (CO_2 & N) onsite without trucks delivering gas tanks to establishments)

Current law in Connecticut allows holders of brew pub permits and manufacturer of beer permits to sell at retail in sealed container which was manufactured at their facility for off premise consumption. Given the larger packaging it is challenging for craft manufactures to package all products this way given the crowded store shelves. Making this change would allow patrons to bring or purchase a growler on site to purchase a craft brew of their choice to meet the consumers demand.

Giving the consumer what they want, where they want it is more than a matter of convenience. Growler purchases will allow customers the opportunity to consume less in an establishment, and bring their favorite products home to consume at their own pace in the safety and privacy of their homes. Customers no longer have to purchase and consume a night's worth of beers while sitting in the establishment. They do not have to feel compelled to "finish" their beer. Now they can bring it home and drink it at a leisurely pace.

This bill is a WIN for everyone involved.

- The consumer wins (Consumers can purchase products of their liking and drink them at their destination of choice, at the pace they'd like)
- The Retail establishment wins (Fulfill their guests requests and allows for additional purchases)
- The state wins (Additional tax revenue)
- The small craft beer companies win (They get their crafted products into consumer hands the way they intended)

Currently the only alcohol product that can be taken home from the restaurant is an unfinished open bottle of wine.
I am asking for your support of this legislation to allow restaurants and cafes to sell draught beer to consumers which would meet our customer demands in an environmentally friendly way. Let's do this together and give the consumer what they want in a green, and safe way!

Thank you,

Phil Barnett