

**George Motel -CT Vineyard & Winery Association
Testimony Before the General Law Committee
February 4, 2015
In Support of HB 5119 An Act Authorizing the Sale of
Certain Brandy By Farm Wineries**



Good Afternoon Senator Kennedy and Representative Albis, my name is George Motel and my wife Judy and I are the owners of Sunset Meadow Vineyard in Goshen Connecticut. We opened our vineyard in the spring of 2008. Our vineyard is comprised of over 40 acres of land and was a former dairy farm we converted into a profitable long lasting agricultural business.

I serve as President of the Connecticut Vineyard and Winery Association. The Connecticut Vineyard and Winery Association consists of 27 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 am here today in support of HB 5119 An Act Authorizing the Sale of Certain Brandy By Farm Wineries. This bill would allow farm wineries to sell brandy made from grapes grown on premises and distilled off premises at a licensed distillery. Currently we are only allowed to sell brandy if it is distilled on our premises. This would help diversify our product lines and offer more to our customers without the high cost of a still for low volume of production. It is common in California wineries to see more one product available for sale or tasting. At Korbel, in Sonoma, the two products that are available are champagne and brandy.

We ask the committee to make one change to the language of the bill. We would like the language to read "brandy manufactured from grapes **and fruit** harvested on the premises of such farm winery". This change would make the law consistent with the rest of the farm winery act and allow individuals like myself, that makes wine from other types of fruit, this ability. It is very important to keep it as stated, from (fruit) " harvested on the premises of such farm winery".

We ask you to support this legislation. Thank you for your consideration.