



Testimony Before the Environment Committee February 4, 2015

In Support of HB 5119 AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE SALE OF CERTAIN BRANDY BY FARM WINERIES

QUALITY FARM PRODUCTS SINCE 1871
"Orchard Hill Farm" West Side Phone 35

6 Generations in Agriculture

Walter Goodrich Bishop
Burton Walter Bishop
Arthur & Charles R. Bishop
Albert & Charles E. Bishop
Keith, Jonathan & Diane Bishop
Sarah Bishop DellaVentura

B.W. BISHOP & SONS, INC.
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My name is Keith Bishop and I am a 5th generation farmer. My family has been farming since 1871 in Guilford CT. We currently grow fruits and vegetables across 313 acres. We established our winery, 9 years ago and we currently produce about 2000 cases and host over 6,000 visitors to our tasting room each year. The diversity of our farm that draws customers to buy our products from the Farm Market, Pick Your Own, Winery to our CSA provides stability that is preserving our 313 acres.

I serve as Treasurer 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 writing 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.

I'm requesting the committee to make one change to the language of the bill: to read "brandy manufactured from grapes, **and fruit** harvested on the premises of such farm winery and distilled off such premises"

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".

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

Keith B. Bishop Co-CEO, Treasurer & Winemaker
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