

February 19, 2015

**Testimony of Seth Hart  
Co-owner of New England Cider Company  
Before the General Law Committee  
In regards to Proposed H.B. No. 5033**

Chairmen Leone and Baram, Ranking Members Witkos and Carter, and members of the General Law Committee.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony today. I am Seth Hart the Co-owner of New England Cider Company located in Wallingford CT. We are a small startup company producing hard apple cider for sale throughout the state. I am here today to discuss the possibility of offering free tastings or samples to customers on premise.

Under the current law, General Statutes Sec. 30-16 part (b), it clearly states that the manufacturers of beer are allowed to offer free tastings and samples of beer brewed on premises to visitors. Also stated under Sec. 30-16 part (e) subsection 2, that a licensed Farm Winery may as well offer free samples to visitors and prospective retail customers.

We produce a product that falls right between both categories of beer and wine, yet we are classified more as a Non-farm Winery. Our cider is currently produced using 100% local Connecticut grown Apples. We have purchased roughly 1000 bushels of apples from local orchards and produced just over 3000 gallons of finished product in our first year of production. For the following season, we wish to triple our production and expand our business to include a retail area and tasting room.

The Hard Cider industry is the fastest growing segment of the alcohol industry with a growth of 75.4% in just the last year. Currently there is roughly 80 apple orchards in this state which makes the growth potential for Hard Cider and Connecticut Farms an easy option. With your help we can make the law a level playing field for all local producers. No matter if its grain, grapes, or apples.

Thank You Again