



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS  
COMMITTEE

February 11, 2015 \* 12:30pm \* Room 2E

#### **Testimony in support of Proposed HB 5328, *An Act Concerning Signage for Wineries on the Connecticut Wine Trail***

Dear Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero, Senator Boucher and Representative O'Dea, and other distinguished members of the Transportation Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of Proposed **HB 5328, *An Act Concerning Signage for Wineries on the Connecticut Wine Trail***.

The Connecticut Wine Trail, established in 1988, is a winery and vineyard awareness program made up of 25 wineries from the Connecticut Vineyard and Winery Association, complete with special directional signs, brochures and special events. These wineries are part of the larger Connecticut agriculture industry, which generates over \$3.5 billion in annual revenue.

Based on a report from the University of Connecticut College of Agriculture and Natural Resources of September 2010, wineries in our state had sales of \$38 million in 2007 and responsible for direct employment of 106 residents. These wineries have grown at a rate of 3.9% per year between 1999 and 2009. We need to support the continued growth of this industry and the ancillary benefit to draw tourists to our state.

From SipNewEngland.com, a web page that provides a "guide to visiting, tasting and enjoying ... New England wines and the wineries that craft them," states the following when describing the Connecticut Wine Trail: "As you wander Connecticut's back roads, **blue-and-white highway signs** help you to find the member wineries. **Signage is not perfect**, however, and the signs tend to be helpful rather than definitive. You will also need maps and directions, or a GPS to help you find the wineries."

These wineries are paying a price for the signage not being perfect through the loss of customers who struggle to locate the winery. Providing the opportunity for wineries along the Connecticut Wine Trail to place a sign under the blue-and-white sign that provides the winery name, a directional arrow and distance to the winery, will greatly improve the ability of customers to locate the winery and support these small businesses.

I urge the Transportation Committee to support HB 5328 and thank all the members for their attention.