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**Testimony Before the General Law Committee**

**March 5, 2015**

**HB 6885 An Act Permitting Restaurant, Café and Tavern Alcoholic Liquor Permit Holders to Sell Growlers of Beer at Retail**

The Connecticut Restaurant Association represents over 600 restaurants and affiliated businesses across the state. Our members range from quick serve to casual to fine dining establishments. The Connecticut hospitality industry employs an estimated 145,000 people, making up 9% of our states' workforce. Restaurants are a driving force in the state's economy and generate tremendous tax revenue.

The Connecticut Restaurant Association strongly supports HB 6885, An Act Permitting Restaurant, Café and Tavern Alcoholic Liquor Permit Holders to Sell Growlers of Beer at Retail. Current law in Connecticut allows holders of brew pub permits and manufacturer of beer permits to sell at retail, sealed containers of beer manufactured at their facility for off premise consumption. These containers are commonly known as growlers. The standard size of a growler is a 64 oz. glass, reusable container. HB 6885 would extend the sale at retail of all draught beer in growlers to restaurant, café and tavern permit holders. This bill does not extend the sale at retail to any other alcohol permit holder. Restaurants and bars would be permitted to sell growlers of beer under the same rules that apply to brew pubs and manufacturers of beer: 4 liters per day, per customer and under the same days and hours as package stores.

There is a consumer demand for beer directly from the tap. Currently, that demand is met by purchasing and consuming draught beer on premise at a restaurant or bar. The off premise choices are much more limited in Connecticut. Beer enthusiasts in Connecticut don't have other options available to them to enjoy draught beer in the comfort of their homes. Allowing restaurants and cafes to sell draught beer to consumers would meet that demand in an environmentally friendly way.

Many other states already allow bars, restaurants and other facilities to sell growlers of beer at retail, including two of our neighboring states- New York and New Jersey. Passage of this legislation will provide Connecticut beer fans with the ability to purchase fresh beer of their choice from restaurants and bars that choose to offer the sale of growlers.

We urge your support of this legislation. Thank you.

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