



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE FRANCE
FORTY-SECOND ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

17 GARDEN DRIVE
GALES FERRY, CT 06335

HOME: (860) 464-9229
CAPITOL: (800) 842-1423
Mike.France@housegop.ct.gov

MEMBER

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS
COMMITTEE

February 23, 2016 * 10:00am * 2E

Testimony in support of S.B. 188, An Act Concerning Farm Winery Retail Sales Hours And Free Wine Tasting At Farmers' Markets.

Dear Senator Leone, Representative Baram, Senator Witkos and Representative Carter, and other distinguished members of the General Law Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **S.B. 188, An Act Concerning Farm Winery Retail Sales Hours And Free Wine Tasting At Farmers' Markets.**

During the 2015 Session, I proposed **H.B. 5297, An Act Extending Farm Winery Hours of Operation**, which stated "That subsection (f) of section 30-91 of the general statutes be amended to extend the hours of operation for farm wineries from nine o'clock p.m. to eleven o'clock p.m. every day of the week." While seeking co-sponsors for H.B. 5297, I learned that there are at least two different business models for our Farm Wineries. There are traditional wine tasting rooms that we are all familiar with but there is also a business model that is more like a general store. The challenge I found in garnering sufficient support to bring the bill forward was that those Farm Wineries with a "general store" business model did not want hours in the evening but instead wanted to be permitted to open at 8:00am. Their elected representatives would not support the extended hours in the evening unless there were also an extension of hours in the morning. Hence, the reason for the bill I proposed this session that would permit hours of operation from 8:00am to 11:00pm. I am in strong support of the proposed language, including the extending of hours on Sundays to be consistent with the rest of the week. These are prime hours for traditional business model Farm Wineries that are open in the evenings since the weekend is their highest traffic time of the week and a draw for tourists in the area. I would recommend that the Committee consider allowing hours of operation that will support those Farm Wineries that have a "general store" business model.

I also support the provision to allow a holder of a manufacturer permit for a Farm Winery to offer free tastings of their wine at Farmer's Markets. Similar to other participants in our local Farmer's Markets who are able to give samples of their wares to promote sales, Farm Wineries should be able to offer free tastings of their products so customers can determine the wine they prefer. This will enhance the

experience of those who want to purchase fresh and local at our Farmer's Markets and promote sales growth for Connecticut Farm Wineries.

I urge the General Law Committee to support SB 188 and thank all the members for their attention.

Regards,

Mike France State Representative, 42nd Assembly District
Ledyard, Preston, Montville