

Dear Representative D'Agostino, Senator Leone, Senator Witkos, Representative Smith, and distinguished members of the General Law Committee,

My name is George Metzger. I am submitting written testimony in support of H.B. 5036 – An Act Promoting Craft Breweries and Distilleries and Price Fairness. As a resident of the State of Connecticut I want to thank you for the opportunity to voice my support of House Bill 5036.

My son is a Cellarman at Beer'd Brewing in Stonington and is a direct beneficiary of the expanding opportunities in the craft brewing industry in Connecticut. As the brewery and revenue grew, he was made fulltime a couple years ago and simply loves his job. This company provides medical insurance, a 401k, paid time off and opportunity for employees to learn new skills. All the elements of a great place to work. Beer'd Brewing is currently building a brand new facility in Groton CT that will increase their production by at least 100%. And this will add even more jobs to our local economy. State laws should be fair and enable Connecticut companies to fully promote and sell their products to their customers. I feel that the 9 liters retail limit is grossly handcuffing our local craft breweries. How is it that small CT wineries are allowed to sell unlimited bottles of wine from their retail outlet, yet beer is somehow different. Second, like wineries, breweries have become day destinations where groups of family and friends gather together. People travel from within and outside of Connecticut to visit the breweries and spend additional tourism dollars in our gas stations, at our restaurants and local businesses. They are always asking why they can only buy 9 liters of high quality fresh beer to take home when other breweries in surrounding states have no such limits. In addition, for many small craft breweries, they need to grow the business via inhouse retail sales as they do not have canning, bottling lines nor access to the sales at package stores. If they can sell more product in their building, they can increase revenues. Lifting the 9 liter limit will provide a level playing field with the wineries and enable craft brewery companies to grow, hire more employees, sell more beer to increase tax collections and spur additional Connecticut tourism.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

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