

Dear Representative D'Agostino, Senator Leone, Senator Witkos, Representative Smith, and distinguished members of the General Law Committee. My name is Phil Pappas, Marketing & Communications Director for the CT Brewers Guild where our mission is, Drink Local. I am here today to submit my 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.

The proposed changes affect not only myself, my family members and friends who visit from out of state, but the families and the community who support our vastly growing breweries. The component of the bill that is most important to me is the removal of the nine-liter retail limit imposed upon state manufacturers of beer. The CT craft beer industry is currently expanding at an increasingly rate, growing from less than 20 breweries and brewpubs in 2012 to now having 65 operational breweries, with 14 currently building and another 34 who are dreaming and applying for permits. That is 113 breweries who are contributing and will continue to support the state of CT. As of December 2017, CT breweries had a \$718M economic impact on the state. With the pass of this bill, we can help grow the CT economy, continue to revitalize our communities, and give back to our charity partners.

The availability of very fresh craft beer is a luxury that should be enjoyed by all who wish to partake. As the law currently stands, when I visit my local CT-based brewery, I am only able to purchase nine liters of beer, requiring me to bring a friend in order to purchase a single case of pint-sized cans for my gathering. When breweries package in their 12 or 16 oz cans, the nine liter limit doesn't equilate to an even oz respectively, requiring most breweries to break off cans in their packages to ensure staying under the legal limit. As always, I still have the opportunity to visit my local retailer to purchase as much beer as I want, however I'm often presented with a lack of variety, higher prices and beer that may be weeks or months old. When I visit my local brewery, it is often an educational experience. I learn about everything from the new varietals of hops utilized, which farm the adjunct ingredients were harvested from, and I receive suggestions on which beer to try next from the experience staff. When I'm already present at the brewery, to be told that it is a State of CT law that prevents me from buying more than 19 pint-sized cans at a time for off-premise consumption and I have to venture elsewhere to purchase any more, is quite unfortunate for me and the brewery I'm trying to support. As the CT Brewers Guild, we are working with the CT Hop Growers Association, local malt farmers and other partners to bring fresh, local CT ingredients to our breweries. Some of our breweries have already been brewing "CT only beer", further promoting and supporting local communities and their families. We are hoping one day to have a "CT Grown Seal" that our breweries can place on their packaging, affirming our commitment to the state of CT. I find it unfortunate that the State of CT has maintained such a protectionist law against breweries while CT based vineyards are able to retail an unlimited volume of wine to tasting room visitors. I often visit family and friends in surrounding states and find myself in New York or Massachusetts visiting breweries. Those states do not impose any type of volume limits and I regularly see patrons utilizing hand trucks to maneuver their daily purchases to their vehicles. It's honestly shocking to see Connecticut, a state that seems to be financially strapped and losing residents, businesses and major corporations hold off on changing this regulation for so long. I'm optimistic that changes will be made to improve these laws and together we will continue to further protect and promote the CT craft beer industry.

Thank you!

Cheers,
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~DRINK LOCAL~