



Testimony in support of House Bill 5036
General Law Committee
March 6, 2018

My name is Peggy Roberts, president of the Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce and a resident of Stonington. This Chamber represents nearly 700 businesses and organizations in an area of the state where tourism is a key employment sector. We contribute a significant amount to the \$14 billion in tourism dollars this state sees each year.

We support House Bill 5036 insofar as it would lift the limit on the sales of craft beer to retail customers. An increase would enable our small business craft brewers to expand and create more much-needed jobs for our area. Several of these businesses, have been started by up-and-coming entrepreneurs in Stonington and Groton and are an increasingly popular draw among tourists in our area. They are especially popular among young adults, an extremely valuable demographic.

Stonington Economic Development Commission Chairman David Hammond also favors this measure. He has worked to assist microbrewers in our area to find appropriate locations and to introduce these welcome businesses to their neighbors in town. Soon, there will be a partnership between one of these brewers and an agricultural heritage district, in an effort to keep farms viable through diversified offerings.

As it now stands, we are at a disadvantage when compared to other states, like Massachusetts, which has a much higher limit, while Connecticut microbrewers are held to only nine liters. An increase would mean growth, not just in employment, but in badly needed tax dollars for the state.

I urge you to support this bill, to give our state's craft brewers the level playing field they deserve and to help our small businesses grow.