

Waypoint Spirits, db Distilling, LLC

Testimony before the General Law Committee, March 6, 2018

House Bill 5036 AN ACT PROMOTING CRAFT BREWERIES AND DISTILLERIES, AND PRICE FAIRNESS

Good Afternoon Members of the General Law Committee, my name is John Taylor, and I am here as an owner of Waypoint Spirits in Bloomfield, CT. On behalf of my partners and employees, I would like to express my thanks to you for considering House Bill 5036 (An act Concerning Craft Manufacturing of Alcoholic Liquor) My company, Waypoint Spirits (db Distilling, LLC) has been operating for two-and-a-half years and have developed an award-winning and unique line of Vodkas, Gin, Whiskey, and Rum. We are currently selling our products here in Connecticut, but are also exporting to an ever-expanding list of states, and are negotiating agreements that will allow us to export outside of the U.S. Our request is to expand the tasting laws at Connecticut distilleries, allowing us to serve cocktails to consumers on our tours, as well as for the 2-ounce sampling limit to be modified. to allow consumers who are attending tours at Connecticut distilleries to also be able to be served cocktails and for the 2 oz sampling limit to be modified.

Waypoint Spirit's mission of creating uniquely crafted spirits is bolstered by the ability to work with Connecticut Farmers who grow the grains, botanicals, honey, and maple syrup that we use as ingredients to produce our spirits, and we are proud to be able to partner with this group of hard-working local producers. We also work with a local Bio Energy Plant (Quantum Biofuels in Southington) to recycle our spent grains into a clean and renewable source of power. We strive to be a good neighbor and are proud that we've been able to create a unique destination that is a combination of manufacturing, agriculture, leisure, and tourism. This local and sustainable method of operating has resonated with our customers and has allowed us to grow, but the tasting laws are not allowing us to engage with our consumers in a truly meaningful way. The nature of craft-distilled spirits is a little bit

different than wine or beer in that our products are meant to be mixed with other ingredients to create a well-balanced cocktail and drinking samples neat, or straight, does not allow the consumer to fully enjoy the spirit. I believe that Connecticut's current laws place us at a competitive disadvantage when compared to breweries and wineries both in terms of our inability to engage our customers for a longer period of time as well as to generate the revenue that we need to grow our company. We want our guests to be able to enjoy the unique experience of visiting a distillery; where they can enjoy a relaxing afternoon out while tasting our spirits where they were created. We look to our tasting room to provide the cash flow to allow us to hire new manufacturing and sales employees who are helping us grow Waypoint Spirits into a National brand. In anticipation of the laws being updated we have already begun the planning phases to expand our tasting room and to hire 6-10 new employees to manage the expected growth.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.