

**Testimony of
Brescome Barton, Inc.
on Senate Bill 1140
“An Act Concerning Wine Importation”
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
April 29, 2019**

Chairman Fonfara, Chairman Rojas, members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee. Brescome Barton, a Connecticut wholesaler of wines and spirits, with corporate offices in North Haven, is submitting testimony on SB 1140, “An Act Concerning Wine Importation.” **We strongly oppose this bill.**

This bill would permit as many as **150 out-of-state retailers** to directly sell and ship quantities of wine directly to Connecticut consumers. Currently, Connecticut residents are allowed to purchase five gallons from licensed shippers in any two-month period. Connecticut’s current law was enacted in 2005 to allow state residents visiting destination vineyards to ship small quantities of favorite wines back home. This bill destroys the “three-tier system” regulating the sale of alcoholic beverages for the health and welfare of the citizens of Connecticut. The provisions of this bill create a new class of retailer not subject to any of the regulatory strictures enforced on in-state retailers, including adherence to the state’s minimum bottle pricing law. It will hurt the over one thousand packages store owners in this state who are strictly regulated and required to pay their share of state taxes on a monthly basis. It will lead to the loss of tax revenue for the state due to the difficulty in auditing and collecting these taxes. Brescome Barton’s wine division, Worldwide Wines, alone imports and distributes over 5,000 selections from every major producing region in the United States and the world. There is no shortage in the variety of wines sold in Connecticut. This bill is both bad law and bad policy, and will not benefit consumers,

but will benefit only out-of-state retailers. We strongly oppose this provision of this bill.

Brescome Barton, a Connecticut wholesaler, collects \$12.3 million in taxes for the state and distributes products creating over \$18 million in sales tax revenue. Provides over \$33 million in wages and benefits, spends \$12.6 million with Connecticut vendors, supplying goods and materials to the market. The company has more than 350 employees in Connecticut, of which 220 are union jobs, along with approximately 50 temporary laborers, virtually all of whom live in Connecticut. As a result, the company, and its employees, has significant ties to the local communities we serve, and are involved in many charitable efforts that support those communities.