

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5306

AN ACT ALLOWING CERTAIN PERMITTEES TO SELL ALCHOLIC LIQUOR

Title: FOR OFF-PREMISES CONSUMPTION

Vote Date: 3/9/21

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/4/2021

File No.: 117

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

General Law Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill is the outcome of an executive order from the Governor during the pandemic. This was introduced to allow consumer to enjoy alcoholic beverages from the safety of their home, as well as keep small businesses like restaurants and breweries competitive and their doors open. The bill would be a three-year trial period. It would allow sales and deliveries only during the hours package stores are currently open, and the direct employee of the manufacturer or restaurant may be the only one to make the delivery. The bill also limits the amounts of liquor per order as well as the container must be sealed. This bill overall would allow consumer more access to alcoholic beverages as well as continue to help business recover from the pandemic while providing safe service.

JFS LANGUAGE:

Defines manufacturer permittee and includes exceptions for containers, delivery of products with out food and limits the amount of wine and beer per order.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None submitted

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Connecticut Beer Wholesalers Association supports the bill. Continuing the sales of to go helps create additional revenue during this time. We would like the language strengthened

by ensuring guide lines on quality, package and beverage type limitations and prohibiting sales below cost.

Phil Pappas, Executive Director, Connecticut Brewers Guild testified in support of the bill. The language in the bill enables a consumer the convenience of two drinks at a time. Ninety five percent of breweries do not have kitchens nor prepare food on-site. We need to maintain flexibilities of service and benefits for our employees and consumers.

Jay Hibbard, Distilled Spirits Councils submitted testimony in support of the bill. The restaurant business has been one of the most impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Job loss has been in the thousands and long established restaurants have closed for ever. The temporary approval of cocktails-to-go provided a source of revenue to many struggling hospitality businesses. This bill extends that for an additional three years. Many states have already extended their sales as demonstrated by the attached map.

Carol Martel, Wine Institute supports the bill. This legislation is timely and essential for Connecticut's restaurant and bars to stay in business. Wineries have been hard hit by the pandemic and direct consumer wine shipment has increased it has not come close to compensating for the loss of wine sales. Ohio, DC, Iowa and Oklahoma have made cocktails-to-go permanent and several states have legislation pending and many have granted this privilege on a temporary basis.

Tom Atkins, Owner, New Park Brewing submitted testimony in favor of the bill. Many changes to our business have happened in the last two years. Curbside pick up and delivery options have benefitted our customers and employees. We need to continue to be able to deliver our product as well as curbside pick-up. Our employees have benefitted from job security and increased learning opportunities and have been able to add full and part-time jobs as we grow our presence in Connecticut.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Brian Moran, New England Convenience Store & Energy Marketers Association opposes the bill. We understand and appreciate the well-intentioned motivations but prior to the pandemic there is no necessity for these measures so there is no need after the executive orders are lifted.

Reported by: Pamela Bianca

March 24, 2021