



May 14, 2020

Hon. Ned Lamont
Governor
State of Connecticut
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Lamont:

On behalf of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (Distilled Spirits Council), the national trade association representing producers and marketers of distilled spirits sold in the United States, I am writing to recommend a clarification and elaboration to your Executive Order 7G, Section 3 – *“Further Clarification of Limits on Restaurants, Bars and Private Clubs”* (EO-7G).

The Distilled Spirits Council previously encouraged the state’s consideration of a series of policy recommendations as you began to consider how to restart the Connecticut economy. Among those recommendations was extending the temporary measures permitting the sale of distilled spirits, beer and wine, by on-premise restaurant licensees, as currently permitted under EO 7G. However, it has come to our attention that there may be some confusion by the industry and the Department of Consumer Protection about what is allowed under EO-7G. Our previous understanding was that the sale of mixed cocktails to-go by restaurant licensees was permitted. We encourage you to issue a guidance making it clear that cocktails to-go are permitted to be sold by restaurants and bars.

While the provision for a partial reopening of restaurants for outdoor dining only later this month will be the first step toward recovery of the hard-hit hospitality industry, the road back to economic stability will be long and difficult for many months to come. The opportunity for restaurants to sell beer, wine and distilled spirits, along with cocktails to-go/mixed drinks for carry-out would be another valuable economic lifeline for those businesses. Currently, 32 states plus the District of Columbia, including New York, Rhode Island and Maine, are allowing restaurants and/or bars to sell cocktails to-go, bottled spirits to-go or both. Such a clarification would also align Connecticut’s guidelines with those of New York, a goal you articulated in a joint media statement with Governor Cuomo in March 2020.

We recognize the challenge the state is facing given the loss of tens of thousands of hospitality jobs. Connecticut’s temporary measures and creative policy solutions have succeeded in providing some much-needed liquidity to these small businesses throughout the state, but, clarifying EO 7G to ensure that cocktails to-go are also permitted would further assist the restaurant industry during this unprecedented time.

Again, on behalf of America’s distillers, we appreciate the leadership you have shown and your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Swonger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chris Swonger
President and CEO