

House Commerce & Labor Committee
Proponent Testimony for HB 669
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COCKTAILS TO-GO SUPPORTS STRUGGLING OHIO BUSINESSES

Chair Manning, Vice Chair Dean, Ranking Member Lapore-Hagan and members of the House Commerce & Labor Committee, I am writing on behalf of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, the national trade association representing producers and marketers of distilled spirits sold in the United States, in support of HB 669, legislation that would make permanent Governor DeWine's Executive Order which permits on-premise establishments to sell "cocktails to-go."

Thousands of hospitality businesses across Ohio including restaurants, taverns, bars, distilleries, and their retail sales operations and tasting rooms have been closed for several weeks. According to the National Restaurant Association, sales at restaurants were down 78 percent in the first few weeks of the nationwide lockdown, causing restaurants to lay off 86 percent of employees. Clearly, this has had a devastating impact on the thousands of people employed by on-premises establishments in Ohio.

Cocktails to-go has become a much-needed lifeline for struggling on-premise locations and has now been approved in over 30 states across the country with New Jersey and Illinois becoming the most recent states whose legislatures have passed legislation to extend this much-needed, business-friendly measure.

MAINTAINING RESPONSIBILITY MEASURES WITH COCKTAILS TO-GO

The distilled spirits industry is committed to responsibility and to encouraging adults who choose to drink to do so in moderation. We strongly support tough laws and enforcement that crack down on all impaired driving.

Cocktails to-go are intended for home consumption. In accordance with state laws, no one should be consuming alcohol while in a motor vehicle. That is why we encourage reasonable standards for containers used in cocktails to-go.

Restaurants and bars are continuing responsible practices including ensuring patrons have valid identification verifying that they are 21 years or older.

eTIPS Off Premise and Delivery provides delivery personnel with strategies and guidelines to protect against sales to underage and/or intoxicated customers. TIPS – (www.gettips.com) a nationally recognized expert in alcohol server training – has created A Guide for Alcohol Delivery and Carry Out (<https://getti.ps/3c5V5aF>).