



**DISTILLED SPIRITS COUNCIL**  
OF THE UNITED STATES

June 1, 2020

Hon. Paul McMurry, Chairman  
Joint Committee on Travel and Tourism  
State House Suite 171  
Boston MA 02133

Dear Representative McMurry:

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 H4767, entitled "*An Act addressing challenges faced by food and beverage establishments resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.*"

As you know, one section of this legislation would allow certain beverage alcohol licensees to sell mixed drinks during a declared state of emergency or, as noted in Section 2 "...until February 28, 2021, whichever is later."

Thousands of hospitality businesses across Massachusetts including restaurants, taverns, and bars, have been closed for many weeks. According to the National Restaurant Association, sales at restaurants were down 78% in the first few weeks of the nationwide lockdown, causing restaurants to lay off 86% of employees. Clearly, this has had a devastating impact on the nearly 350,000 people employed by on-premise establishments across the Commonwealth. H4767 would allow these struggling businesses some relief beyond the expiration of the Governor's Emergency Orders brought on by the ongoing Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We also believe that on-premise establishments will struggle beyond the proposed expiration date of February 28, 2021 and would recommend that date be extended to September 30, 2021. A new normal will be a long time coming for the almost sixteen thousand eating and drinking establishments in Massachusetts and keeping these businesses viable and employees working will be critical.

The measures proposed by H4767 are a logical and modest policy proposal and they will aid businesses in the future as they work to recover from the economic hardship brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Jay Hibbard  
Vice President Government Relations