



DISTILLED SPIRITS COUNCIL
OF THE UNITED STATES

February 4, 2021

Hon. James Maroney, Co-Chair
Hon. Michael D'Agostino, Co-Chair
Connecticut General Law Committee
Legislative Office Building, Room 3500
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Maroney and Representative D'Agostino:

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, a national trade association representing producers and marketers of distilled spirits and importers of wines sold in the United States in support of H.B. 5306 entitled "An Act Allowing Certain Permittees to Sell Alcoholic Liquor for Off-Premises Consumption. As you know, this proposed legislation would allow on-premise alcohol licensees to liquor and mixed drinks with a food purchase for a period of three years after enactment. Under the legislation, mixed drinks must be in sealed containers, appropriately labeled and placed in the trunk or non-passenger compartments of a vehicle.

The hospitality industry, which represents tens of thousands of jobs across Connecticut's eight counties, has been one of the most impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Job losses have been in the thousands, and many long-established restaurants have closed their doors permanently. Closures and reduced capacity restrictions have caused a dramatic reduction in restaurant sales. The temporary approval of cocktails-to-go has provided a meaningful source of revenue to the many struggling hospitality businesses across the state and extending those privileges is good policy to assist in the industry's recovery.

As you can see from the attached map, 31 states plus the District of Columbia are currently allowing restaurants and/or bars to sell cocktails to-go as temporary measures and Iowa and Ohio have made cocktails-to-go permanent. Michigan approved a five-year extension of these privileges in 2020 and as of February 2, 2021, thirty-nine bills in 22 states have been filed providing for long-term extensions or permanent cocktails-to-go privileges.

From the standpoint of responsibility, the Distilled Spirits Council and the spirits industry is committed to responsible consumption and encourages moderation for adults who choose to drink alcohol. As the legislation and regulatory guidance makes clear, cocktails to-go are intended for home consumption and all laws governing alcohol consumption and the prohibitions on drinking while driving must always be observed.

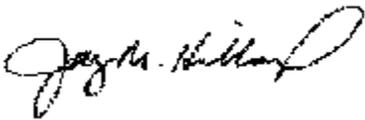
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The future of the hospitality industry will be dependent upon many factors out of the control of licensees, e.g. restricted capacity measures, the uncertainty of customer comfort levels to return to eating and drinking establishments or even weather. H.B. 5306 will be a valuable step toward recovery.

We encourage the Committee to vote positively on this important legislation and provide Connecticut's hospitality businesses with this measure of certainty for the future of their operations.

We appreciate your consideration of our views regarding H.B. 5306. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me by telephone at 207-831-8285, by email at jay.hibbard@distilledspirits.org or our Connecticut counsel Linda Kowalski.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay M. Hibbard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "H".

Jay M. Hibbard
Senior Vice President State Public Policy

cc: Members of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs