

Northwest Natural Spirits, LLC  
Mail: 1626 NW 15<sup>th</sup> Ave. Portland, OR 97209  
Ship: 575 E Sun Ranch Dr. Sisters, OR 97759  
www.wildrootsspirits.com



February 4th, 2020

**Senator Chuck Riley,**

My name is Christopher Joseph, I'm the president and founder of Wild Roots Spirits in Portland, Oregon. I'm writing to you regarding SB 1565 and its significance to my company.

Wild Roots was launched in 2013 when I was 23 years old. Having been born and raised in Oregon, I knew that few places in the world could produce fruit as flavorful and abundant as the state's Willamette Valley. By combining Oregon's fruit and delicious drinking water, we created a unique and healthier alternative to artificially flavored vodkas historically lining the shelves of liquor stores. Today, Wild Roots produces a line of 10 naturally infused spirits that strive to embody the true essence of the Pacific Northwest.

The craft distillery community employs nearly 17,000 Oregonians and helps drive Oregon's tourism and craft beverage economy. We participate in a collective organization called Distillery Row. We are a group of 11 independent distillers crafting over 80 unique spirits who meets on a monthly basis to support one-another and our communities. We collectively organize cocktail crawls, passport memberships, and other fun and engaging activities for Portlanders and visitors alike.

Wild Roots has two tasting rooms, one in Central Eastside and the other in Sisters, Oregon. Tasting rooms are essential to our business model. Having a location for consumers to try our spirits before they buy is a way for smaller distillers like ourselves to disrupt the current market and stand out amongst larger corporations. A common topic of conversation at Distillery Row meetings is tasting rooms and their profitability. Every tasting room in Portland is operating at a loss in part due to high taxes paid to the OLCC. We continued to operate these locations for marketing purposes, but it becomes more difficult each year to justify this expense.

My wife and I have been participating in Farmers Markets, Events, and Tradeshows since we started the company several years ago. Since then, we've participated in hundreds of events, many of which are for non-profits and charitable organizations. We are also regulars at several local farmers markets and holiday markets throughout the year. We are struggling to continue our participation in these due to high taxes paid to the OLCC. More often than not, our expenses exceed our revenue.

We are passionate about Wild Roots, and the growth it's gained through our retail outlets, but we can't continue to operate them at a loss while trying to facilitate our growth. Our goal is to make our tasting rooms and events profitable so we can continue to grow Oregon's craft distillery industry. SB 1565 will lessen our burden on taxes, so we can continue to operate our retail outlets and contribute to our community in meaningful ways. A reduction in taxes will mean we are able to participate in more charitable events and farmers markets, rent our tasting room space to Non-Profits, and employ local, talented individuals. For these reasons and more, I urge your yes vote of SB 1565.

Thank you,

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

Christopher Joseph  
President/Founder  
Wild Roots Spirits