

Senate Bill 406 – Wine Shipping Direct to Consumers
House Committee on General Government
Testimony by Dyson DeMara
April 29, 2021

Chair Wilde, Vice-Chairs Leif and Lively, Members of the Committee:

My name is Dyson DeMara, and my wife and I own HillCrest Winery and Distillery in Roseburg, which is Oregon's oldest estate winery and known as the birthplace of Pinot Noir. I also own Paul O-Brien Winery in Roseburg, the Umpqua Valley's first urban winery. I serve as a member of the Board of Directors for the Oregon Wine Council, which represents over 50 percent of the Oregon wine grapes grown, produced and sold.

I am here today to urge you to support Senate Bill 406. This bill would help Oregon's wineries remain competitive with our neighboring states by modernizing our direct-to-consumer shipping regulations. The bill would increase the number of cases of wine a winery is allowed to ship directly to a consumer from two cases to five cases, a nominal increase, but one that would make a world of difference for small wineries like mine that rely on direct-to-consumer shipping for a large portion of our sales, now more than ever.

As you are well aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on Oregon's wine industry as tourism came to standstill and tasting rooms have faced constantly changing regulations, closures, and occupancy limits. Nationwide, winery tasting room sales are estimated to have declined by 80% in 2020. Direct to consumer shipping is a lifeline that some of Oregon's smallest wineries have relied on during the pandemic to stay afloat, but the arbitrary limit of two cases per customer has hindered our ability to remain competitive with Washington and California, which have no direct-to-consumer shipping limits.

As many small wineries, particularly those in Southern Oregon, continue to deal with the long-term financial impacts of last year's wildfires, we need all the help we can get. This bill would be a simple, straightforward and rational way to allow us to get our products safely to our customers, while supporting our state's small businesses.

I understand this bill passed unanimously out of the Senate and I hope you will also support this small, but substantial lifeline to Oregon's homegrown, local wine industry which, like many other industries, has suffered so much this year. Thank you for supporting Senate Bill 406.

Dyson DeMara
HillCrest Vineyards, Owner