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To:

Oregon House Economic Development and Small Business Committee

Bull Run Distillery is writing this letter in support of HB2976. Bull Run is a Portland distillery founded in 2010 with a primary focus on making American Single Malt Whiskey made with Oregon grown malted barley and aged in Oregon Oak barrels. Since that time, we have expanded with numerous custom barrel finishing programs, sourcing barrels from the Oregon Wine Industry as well as from other Oregon Distilleries. We operate two tasting rooms, one in Portland at the distillery and the other in Carlton.

Currently Bull Run distributes to 17 States and Canada with the majority of sales composed of custom barrel offerings for Retailers and Clubs. Our success has been achieved by reimagining the traditional Supplier-Distributor relationship where we directly connect with retailers and clubs around the country and use the distributor solely for legally required delivery purposes. Our most significant hurdle is the consolidation in the distribution industry. Fewer small regional and localized distributorships exist which were, in general, predisposed to carrying unique craft spirits in contrast to national distributors with massive offerings and established national brands.

Although Bull Run Distillery started in 2010 I personally have been involved in the Oregon distillery scene since 1996 with two previous distilleries. Oregon in the early 2000's, was at the epicenter of the Craft Distilling movement. There was a good deal of attention and notoriety directed at Oregon distilleries helped by the creation of the Oregon Distillers Guild, the first Craft Distillers Guild in America. But the spread of Craft distilleries nationwide has diluted Oregon's influence. I believe a well-funded Spirits Board would be instrumental in boosting the image of Oregon as a leader in the industry. Building that image would certainly be a plus to convince distributors to look at Oregon spirits favorably in a crowded market, and help reinvigorate Spirit tourism within the State.

Sincerely,
Lee Medoff
Co-Founder & Head Distiller

