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Dear Legislator;

We are writing to inform you of our deep concern over recent language proposed for the Wisconsin State Budget severely limiting the rights of Wisconsin's Craft Brewers to self-distribute and retain operation liquor licenses. Specifically, we are referring to the following sections:

*Motion #414 -Motion 414 requiring brewers to first sell their beer to distributors before buying it back to serve in a brewery's tasting and retail shop or restaurant. The legislation was drafted by the Wisconsin Beer Distributors Assn and Miller/Coors.*

*Page 2, paragraphs 2 & 3 removes any relationships for a class "B" liquor license or retail license. The motion conveniently has an exception for the wholesalers who now can sell beer to it's employees and have event's where it is consumed on their premises.*

*Page 3, 3rd paragraph, 'Specify that no person holding a Class "A" or Class "B" license or permit or a wholesaler's permit may register as a brewer'.*

In short, these provisions will serve to drastically restrict the ability of craft brewers to profit from their dedication and avocation and in turn reduce or completely eliminate their ability to invest in higher quality ingredients. This action would have direct and potentially catastrophic consequences to the embryonic Wisconsin Hop industry. It would have an equal impact on the Wisconsin Barley industry, which is also a great rotation crop for Wisconsin farmers.

WI craft brewers consume nearly 1 million pounds of hops annually, all imported. Wisconsin was once a leader in hop production and could be once again. Even a small percentage of this market would result in millions of dollars returning directly to WI farms and local economies. However, this requires that brewers have the flexibility to invest in local production to help increase sales and reduce price points. The future of our industry and the return of profitable farming to WI depends on the craft brewing industry retaining their ability to produce, sell, and reinvest as a proper free-market economy should.

We conclude with a direct request: As citizens of WI, we request that you do not support this language and reject the budget motion.

Kindly,

James Altwies

Jon Reynolds

