

My name is Graham Veysey. I am an entrepreneur and small business owner based in Cleveland and am founder and CEO of Firehouse Can Co, the first exclusive canned wine company that I launched in 2015 with my childhood pal Fisk Biggar who I met 30 years ago at Camp Roosevelt on the shores of Lake Erie.

In the last five years, we've taken this barstool idea and expanded to over 30 states with key accounts such as Walmart, Whole Foods, Meijer, and our most recent big win, Levy Restaurant Group, the over billion dollar concessionaire for some of the largest stadiums and arenas in the U.S.

I write to strongly advocate for Senate Bill 274, to establish the F -11 permit.

Now why do we need another permit?

It is about EFFICIENCY

It is about COMMUNITY

It is about ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

As a wine guy, let me get some salient points out of the way.

Why is this an economic development issue? Wine is an over billion dollar...yes BILLION with a B industry just in our state.

Based on a study commissioned by the Ohio Grape Industries Committee -- on the other side of the chamber -- in August of 2017, by Frank, Rimerman+Co, LLP, a leading research source on the U.S. Wine Industry, the Ohio Wine industry is a \$1.314 billion state industry with over 8,000 jobs.

The most widely used F permit ignores the important economic driver of wine and is beer only. But don't think of beer as a zero sum game.

Our canned wine has continuously broken the record of wine sales Cleveland Browns Stadium. If you were to reach out to Aramark, the national concessionaire, they would say that our wine sales DID NOT come at the expense of beer sales, but that it broadened the availability of options to attendees someone might:

- Like wine better than beer;
- Have a gluten tolerance issue;
- Or just wanted to give their beer belly the day off.

But we're not here to talk about football.

The spirit of the F permit is for temporary events for charitable organizations. But why shouldn't people attending those have the same option as people at Browns Stadium?

My motivating factor to be standing before you is not just because I am a wine guy. I'm also a neighborhood guy. The firehouse on this can is part of a revitalization effort I have been involved with in the Ohio City neighborhood in Cleveland for over a decade. There has been hundreds of millions of dollars in investment and part of that is the strengthening of neighborhood fabric led by organizations like Ohio City Incorporated and the Cleveland museum of art.

One such series is called Ohio City States that take place right outside of the Firehouse each week in July. It would attract almost five thousand people of all walks of life – everyone from Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority to the recently renovated Victorian homes.

I telephoned last night a friend who used to help facilitate the F permits for these events and she talked about the “jumping through hoops” and “finagling for something that should be much more simple.” The challenge is not the paperwork but the redundancy of it. Why do we need the redundancy when we all strive for greater efficiency in the spirit of building community?

There is no F permit that considers “series” events that are so vital to so many organizations. The F permit is just 2x per a 30 day period. The F-2 is just 1 time per 30 day period. It is organizationally and fiscally irresponsible as is.

It isn't just in Ohio City but also in places like University Circle. Wade Oval Wednesday, a musical series that has been going over the last 15 year has over 60,000 people a summer and is one of the most attended and diverse events in Cleveland.

Funds raised go to housing stabilization, senior programs, and beautification initiatives.

Neighborhoods in Athens, Zanesville, Ashtabula, Toledo, Dayton, Columbus, Cincinnati, and rural organizations in all of our 88 counties including Madison and the 11 you represent in Northwest Ohio will all benefit from this.

This is a simple fix and its passage will be met by the gratitude of numerous community and charitable organizations all over this state.

Currently, any series occurring on a weekly basis has to jump cumbersome and repetitive administrative hoops.

Thank you so much for your attention and your time and I hope you all enthusiastically support SB 274.