

High Bank Distillery Co.

Adam Hines

Co-Founder & Director of Distilling Operations

Testimony on House Bill 669

We opened our doors almost 2 ½ years ago (May 2018). High Bank Distillery is a full-service restaurant & bar with over 210 seats and a production distillery that makes whiskey, vodka, gin, & barrel aged rum. We are located on Goodale Blvd in Grandview, Ohio

This past November, December, January, and February were all record months for us on both the restaurant and distillery sides of the business leading up to the COVID-19 mandated shutdown.

Come March, we had to lay off 90% of our staff and immediately change our business model from a dine-in elevated casual food and cocktail experience, to a carry-out burger, chicken sandwich and pizza shop (we had never made a pizza up until that point) encouraging customers to support us by grabbing a bottle of one of our spirits on the way out.

Our distillery went from bottling whiskey, vodka, gin, and rum to bottling over 1,000 bottles of sanitizer a day to keep the lights on and our staff employed after losing all wholesale possibilities.

Since switching over to a carry-out model, the most frequently asked question when customers are placing a delivery order (whether that be through GrubHub, Postmates, ChowNow, or us personally driving it) is, "Can I add a bottle of liquor to the order?"...and the answer is always... "No."

4 months after our restaurant has been allowed to re-open in a limited capacity, this is still the case. We continue to field numerous requests weekly to ship or deliver our products for people to enjoy at home. We estimate that we have lost out on \$60,000+ of potential revenue in the past 6 months, from not being able to deliver our spirits with food orders.

We are fortunate to have a large, open-aired, facility and patio where we can still maintain the required social distancing to keep our patrons safe while operating at about 70% of our original capacity. Our fear is that when the weather starts to turn, and we have to shut down our patio, we will then only have about 50% of our original capacity. Achieving break-even numbers to keep our staff employed will be increasingly difficulty, if not impossible.

We need additional paths to profitability. Being able to sell to-go cocktails through our bar is very beneficial and something we have been able to take advantage of. What would truly help our distillery thrive is the ability to ship products directly to consumers, just like the beer and wine industries can. This would open up an entirely different revenue stream that could

determine the future success and viability of our “new normal,” post COVID-19 and allow us to position and market ourselves in a more competitive way.

I appreciate your consideration and ask that you please pass House Bill 669 in support of small businesses like mine.

Thank you.