



Representative Jeff LaRe
73rd House District

House Bill 86 Sponsor Testimony

Chairman Schaffer, Vice-Chair Landis, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and members of the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 86. This piece of legislation is House Bill 629 from the 134th General Assembly which would increase micro-distillery production limits and revise the cost for liquor tasting samples.

The first part of House Bill 86 allows those who currently have an A-3a liquor permit to be able to distill any amount of spirituous liquor per year, while restoring the 100,000-gallon limit for any new A-3a permit holder in the future. This increase in allowable liquor production for micro-distillers will help create opportunities for small businesses to expand and have more sales freedom in the State of Ohio. Further, this will help the pandemic recovery of these small businesses who are still finding ways to make up for lost revenue.

The second part of House Bill 629 removes the 50-cent liquor sample cost requirement and allows stores with a D-8 permit to offer consumable tasting samples on-site. This aspect of the bill will allow products to be sampled before purchase and allow smaller distillers to showcase their product, without the burden of charging consumers for samples. This bill would allow local distillers to grow their product, ultimately creating a stronger representation from the small business community in alcohol sales.

Finally, there is a provision in the bill that removes grains of paradise, a spice from the ginger family that is currently used in Bombay Sapphire, from the list of substances that are prohibited for use in the adulteration of liquor. The grains of paradise was originally outlawed after the Civil War as a public health issue, however as modern medicine has revealed, that is far from the case. Other than being a good spice to use in craft beers or gin, it also has shown to reduce inflammation and kill certain bacteria. The grains of paradise provision in the banned substances is outdated and this bill simply seeks to correct it.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 86. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have at this time.