



Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance Proponent Testimony on House Bill 198

April 30, 2025

Chair Thomas, Vice Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaacsohn and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of Ohio's 25,821 restaurant and foodservice locations and Ohio's 564,000 restaurant and foodservice workers, the Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance (ORHA) appreciates the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 198.

As representatives of Ohio's hospitality industry, we are writing to support those Ohio brewers who took it upon themselves to responsibly test a new market and experiment with hemp infused beverages. Alongside Ohio's brewers, and in support of those bars and restaurants who might also be interested in this potential market, we testified last General Assembly in support of hemp infused beverages being regulated similarly to alcohol, like how brewers were already treating hemp beverage sales, including of course being sold only in an already age regulated, 21 and over environment. Our thanks to the sponsors for keeping this unique product in mind for this bill. This bill accomplishes our goals of ensuring that bars', restaurants', and brewers' ability to serve and sell these beverages remain maintained.

- The bill allows beverage manufacturers the freedom to offer drinks for consumption on premises.
 - Hemp beverage sales on premises means that consumers who may be more alcohol conscious still could consume a stimulating beverage while out at a bar.
- As written in the law, beverages can go up to 10mg for common consumable products. This allows Ohio to remain competitive with our neighboring states and helps ensure that tax dollars stay within the state.
- Should the General Assembly levy a tax on the sale of hemp beverages, we ask that the rate be similar to the tax on beer, that being \$.17 per gallon.

Tod Bowen

Managing Director of External Affairs and Government Relations

Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance