



March 24, 2025

SENT VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Kristina Roegner
Chair, Senate General Government Committee
Ohio Senate
The Statehouse
Columbus, Ohio 43215

RE: SB 86 - Intoxicating Hemp and Cannabinoid Beverages

Dear Chair Roegner,

The Wine Institute is an association of over 1,100 California wineries and affiliated suppliers dedicated to advocating for the responsible consumption and enjoyment of wine. We would like to share our thoughts regarding SB 86 To Regulate and Tax Intoxicating Hemp and Cannabinoid Beverages. We applaud the Senate's efforts to regulate and restrict the sale of cannabinoid beverages but must oppose the bill as drafted for several reasons.

Wine Institute supports regulations that ensure safety of consumers and communities but believe that individuals should be prohibited from purchasing or consuming intoxicating cannabis or hemp products at licensed alcohol beverage premises. Co-locating the products can and will cause consumer confusion regarding what they are purchasing, and whether the two substances could be used in conjunction with one another. Allowing cannabinoid beverages to be consumed at on-premises establishments also endanger the health and safety of residents in the State. Currently there is no roadside testing for cannabis induced driving impairment. Police can only utilize breathalyzers for alcohol and enforce alcohol impairment. Cannabis or hemp-based beverage consumers have no incentive to curb their consumption as there is no risk of being caught, which therefore places alcohol consumption on a disparate playing field. In addition, we believe that any legislation should prohibit the infusion of cannabis into alcoholic beverages.

We understand that SB 86 and its cannabis focused companion bill, SB 56, do not address the infusion of cannabis into alcoholic beverages but you might consider ensuring there is language to prohibit such infusions. The State of California has banned such infusion because science is inconclusive, and mixing the two could pose adverse risk to consumers.

Currently in the State of Ohio, alcohol and cannabis are regulated by two separate agencies. Because of this, maintaining separate retail outlets for the products makes sense. Each is highly regulated and deserves individual scrutiny and penalty for underage sales and marketing to minors and advertisements regarding health claims. Blurring the lines between the two substances and their regulatory authorities will further complicate compliance with the law. **Therefore, we respectfully request that all cannabis, cannabis infused, and hemp or hemp-infused products or beverages be sold through state licensed dispensaries rather than licensed alcohol beverage premises.**

The Wine Institute is happy to work with you to address these issues as you seek to regulate these products in an effective manner. If there is more information we can provide, please feel free to contact me or my colleague in Columbus, Jeff DeLeone.

Best Regards,



Carrie Rand-Anastasiades

Director, Northeast States

Wine Institute

crand@wineinstitute.org

C: Jeffrey T. DeLeone, Ohio Government Affairs, 614-221-3700

jdeleone@deleoneassociates.com