

Members of the Commerce and Labor Committee,

We write to you today as small business owners and representatives of breweries in your districts, to express our collective support for House Bill 306.

As proprietors of local breweries, we have had the privilege of contributing to our communities, fostering economic growth and creating jobs over the past few years. However, the impact of our industry has been blunted by the 50-year-old franchise law meant to apply to large, powerful breweries. The Ohio Alcoholic Beverages Franchise Act of 1974 creates an artificial obstacle to the sustainable growth and success of our small businesses. We believe that House Bill 306 provides a crucial opportunity to address these challenges and create a more equitable environment for small, independent breweries like ours.

Enacted in an era before small breweries existed, the franchise law was intended to protect small, local businesses from the undue influence of their massive suppliers. As small breweries have carved out a share of the modern beer market, we've witnessed firsthand how this antiquated law has become a hindrance rather than a protection for our small businesses.

Franchise law restricts our ability to negotiate fair, enforceable contracts and adapt to ever-evolving market dynamics. It inserts state government into business relationships in a way that disadvantages small business to the benefit of big business. It creates a market based not on consumer demand but on the motivation of the wholesale distributor. The proposed reforms in House Bill 306 will differentiate small craft breweries from our large, multinational counterparts to whom franchise law was meant to apply. These common sense changes are essential for our survival, growth and ability to compete in a rapidly changing industry.

By granting us the flexibility to build equitable and sustainable partnerships with our distributors, this reform would not only benefit our businesses directly but also strengthen local economies in the communities we proudly serve. It would allow us to respond more effectively to consumer demands and continue contributing to the unique character of our respective regions.

As members of the Commerce and Labor Committee, we understand that you play a pivotal role in the legislative process. We ask you to pass House Bill 306 out of committee for consideration by your colleagues in the House. Your leadership on this matter is instrumental in moving this crucial legislation forward and ensuring the voices of small business owners who operate in virtually every district in Ohio are heard.

Sincerely,

Adam Benner, Dr. Quintin Jessee + Walt Keys, Land-Grant Brewing Company, Columbus

Seth Blewitt, Old Capitol Brewing, Chillicothe

Joshua Blubaugh, Akronym Brewing, Akron

Joshua Blubaugh, Akronym Public House + Pilot Brewery, Medina

Betty + Bob Bollas, Fibonacci Brewing, Cincinnati

Collin Castore, Antiques on High, Columbus

Abby + John Chandler, Paladin Brewing, Youngstown

Mark Crnjak, Missing Falls Brewery, Akron

Janice + Terry DeLap, Broadview Brewing Company, Broadview Heights

Aspasia Lyras + Richard Bernacki, Penguin City Brewing, Youngstown

Bryan Duncan, Nocterra Brewing Co. at Scioto Audubon, Columbus

Mark Feldner, Nobleman Brewing Company, Caldwell

Joe Kearns, Ohio Brewing Company, Columbus

Adam Keck, Modern Methods Brewing Company, Warren

Heather and Josh Lange, DankHouse Brewing Company, Newark

Gavin Meyers, North High Brewing Company, Columbus

Clark Myers, Buck's Brewing Company, Newark

Art Oestrike, Jackie O's Brewery, Athens and Columbus

Marc Reinecke, Outskirts Brew Co. and Dive, Lima

Tom Robbins, Brighten Brewing, Copley

Bobby Slattery, Fifty West Brewing, Chillicothe + Cincinnati

Chris Surak, Eighty-Three Brewery, Akron

Jason + Josh Sweet, Boss Dog Brewing Co., Cleveland Heights

Alan + Bob Szuter, Wolf's Ridge Brewing, Columbus