

Chair Stevens and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Vermont Brewers Association (VBA), I wanted to express our concern with Section 2 of Draft 4.1 that authorizes the Department of Liquor and Lottery to contract to provide support for festivals and events.

As you may know, the VBA is a non-profit 501(c)6 organization. Our two primary festivals, our Spring event at Killington (which sadly we had to cancel this year due to COVID19 concerns) and our Summer event on the Burlington waterfront, are our annual fundraisers. The money raised from our events directly supports our organization and the brewing industry through marketing, education and advocacy for Vermont made beer.

At these events, **the VBA contracts for the services of fire, police and security.** We employ these expensive, but necessary services for the sake of our guests' well-being and to ensure our compliance with local and state law. DLL agents monitor our events to ensure compliance with our negotiated permit conditions.

DLL did not discuss with us, or even notify us, of this proposed language in the current draft. Over the years we have worked closely with our local enforcement agents and have built strong lines of communication and trust that the VBA is committed to complying with all DLL regulations. We are unclear on the basis for the insertion of this language into the current draft of the bill.

We have been hosting the Vermont Brewers Festival for 28 years and in the four years that it has been under my oversight, we have received no violations. We work diligently to educate our brewers and those that pour for them at our events about compliance in accordance with the DLL's regulations. If the department chooses to confirm we are complying by attending our event, that is the department's choice and their enforcement agent's job, which is NOT a fee that should be incurred by our association.

I would also like to respond to a few points made by Commissioner Delaney in his testimony on March 26, 2020. The first is that we want their enforcement agents present at our events. Although we have worked very closely with the DLL enforcement agents over the years to develop a solid working relationship, we do not need their presence onsite. We welcome them if they choose to attend, but we object to paying for their department to make that choice.

Second is that DLL agents are needed for training. Our staff is DLL certified and has the knowledge and ability to host a training at the start of every session of our festivals to ensure pourers are compliant with DLL regulations. We do this regularly if and when DLL agents are not onsite at the start of a festival session. It is also important to note that all of our pourers are DLL certified.

Finally, the DLL enforcement agents are NOT the only presence onsite responsible for public safety. We employ 15 police officers, 67 security personnel and 8 firefighter / EMTs to ensure our events are safe for everyone in attendance. The cost of which is \$20K annually. We also have 20 volunteers each session walking the grounds to ensure compliance. Paying DLL enforcement agents would be double-paying on our part and seems completely unnecessary.

To the extent that the VBA would be required to pay any amount above and beyond the cost of the permit, for DLL agents to monitor our events or for other services that we do not request nor require, we object. We are already required to pay to provide for the safety of our guests, and, through our permit fees, pay to ensure compliance with our permit conditions. Any additional payments to DLL would be duplicative and unnecessary.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and I am happy to answer any questions.