

Thank you, Chair Stevens, and members of this committee, for inviting me to speak regarding H638.

Reflecting about rectified spirits and fortified wines, I'm sure that my Vermont grandmother and great grandmother would not have been pleased with me presenting this bill since they were very religious and probably approved of the Temperance movement and may have even been members. On the other hand, having been born and raised in Newport, and its proximity to the border, I am also familiar with some of the boot legging stories from the area during Prohibition.

This testimony is more to do with the comparison of H. 638 which I submitted and that of H. 591 presented by Rep Birong. Both bills are similar with one little difference and that is H. 591 has in Section 1, b3 the setting of prices by the department where in H. 638, I purposely left that portion out. I suspect that this will not be very popular with the Division of Liquor Control. Speaking with a friend in this line of work, he did inform me that the Department does seem to try to accommodate and work on pricing with the businesses. Certainly, more can be done to support this new industry which will ultimately assist in growing Vermont's economy, creating jobs and attracting more tourists to the area and maybe even encourage them to relocate to the Green Mountains. I hope that the Division of Liquor Control will be forward looking by reviewing requested changes from the industry and continue to work with the legislature so that we can all assist in making these distillers flourish and be profitable.

Finally, if H. 638 does not move forward out of this committee, I would recommend that H. 591 should, and that this committee would possibly make further amendments or recommendations that would reduce restrictions on the industry.

Thank you,

Woody

WOODMAN H. PAGE
VT House of Representatives
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