



Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

URGENT: Imperative to support passage of H.921

1 message

Chris Kesler <chris@blackflannel.com>

Sun, May 17, 2026 at 3:00 PM

To: jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us

Cc: ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us, Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>, Jessica Oski <oski@necrasongroup.com>

Good Afternoon Speaker Krowinski,

My name is Chris Kesler, founder of Black Flannel Brewing & Distilling in Essex. I serve as the Vice President of the Distilled Spirits Council of Vermont (DSCV) and a long-time committee member of the Government Affairs Committee of the Vermont Brewer's Association. I also serve on the leadership council of the Vermont Independent Restaurant group (VTIR) facilitated by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce. As you can see, I work to serve the interests of multiple industries in the state and I urge you to facilitate the passage of the current "Alcohol Bill" H.921.

Many constituents within these industries have spent the better part of 3 years, working with various stakeholders throughout Vermont, to craft elements included in H.921. This has included fully transparent, on-going discussions with members of other beverage manufacturing industries (Wine and Cider) and restaurants who want access to as many small Vermont craft brands as possible. Throughout this process and without exception, all stakeholders within these groups support all elements of H.921, including self-distribution (proposed by Brewers which will give parity with what wine & cider are currently allowed), and 2 minor modifications to Class 4 tasting rooms - 1.) tasting volume limit increases (proposed by Wine) and 2.) the ability to purchase products directly from all other small VT Manufacturers (limit 7 other distillers) in up to 5 class 4 tasting rooms (proposed by Spirits - this is an expansion of 1 to 5).

H.921 passed all committees in both the house and senate unanimously after rigorous vetting and testimony. Not until after the bill passed the house did one Vermont beer manufacturer express concern over "tied-house" issues, when they had been given ample opportunity to participate in these on-going discussions from the beginning. Even after expressing their concerns, senate committees chose to pass the bill unanimously.

As the owner of a small manufacturer (roughly 1/20th the size of the party expressing concern), I too have concerns over any legislation that will create conditions where a single entity can create unfair competitive advantages. Specifically, a total dismantling of the 3-tier system I believe would be a bad thing for our state. **This bill does not do that.** There are still plenty of guardrails in place in current Vermont alcohol laws to ensure conditions do not create tied-houses. For example:

- Only licensed beverage manufacturers are allowed to purchase Class 4 licenses
- Class 4 locations cannot serve more than what amounts to one full pour (Class 4 tasting rooms are geared toward being an experience destination where manufacturers can introduce their brand to the marketplace)
- Brands who are currently distributed by Farrell or Baker are under a franchise agreement and would not be able to self-distribute
- The language in H.921 limits self-distribution to 3000 barrels which is about 1/5 to 1/20 what larger Vermont manufacturers routinely distribute
- Anyone who has common ownership in a manufacturing facility and other bars or restaurants, are prohibited from directly distributing their products to more than 2 of their own locations, and both of those must be manufacturing locations.

All elements of H.921 were carefully crafted with preventing tied-house conditions in mind. It is my firm belief that the concerns being expressed are out of a misunderstanding of what is actually in the bill. The owners of the manufacturer expressing concern have failed to engage with other industries or even other stakeholders within their own industry. We are concerned that suppression of this bill will have the unintended effect of suppressing competition from smaller up-and-coming brands operating in Vermont beverage manufacturing industries.

I urge you to please do everything in your power to not let this “11th hour” attempt to stop H.921, by facilitating its swift passage. Passage of this bill can only strengthen an already strong brewing industry in Vermont, and help to give other manufacturing categories the ability to grow their businesses, and therefore the jobs and VT tourism that would ultimately follow.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



CHRIS KESLER
Founder • Brewer • Educator
Advanced Cicerone®
BJCP® National Beer Judge

chris@blackflannel.com
802-488-0089
blackflannel.com



BLACK FLANNEL BREWING & DISTILLING CO • ESSEX VERMONT
Beer • Food • Cocktails • Spirits

A Celebration of Exceptional CRAFT



Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Passage of the H.921, specifically Section 6

1 message

Michael Drake <mike@1strbc.com>

Sun, May 17, 2026 at 11:17 AM

To: "jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us" <jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us>

Cc: "ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us" <ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us>, Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>, Heather Drake <heatherdrake34@gmail.com>

Dear Speaker of the House -we're writing to you today urging the passage of the H.921, specifically Section 6.

Specifically, we want to point out the following:

- Allowing limited self-distribution to first- and second-class establishments (bars, restaurants and stores), as proposed in [H.921](#), would give small Vermont brewers like us- 1st RBC, the opportunity to grow our brand, possibly to the extent that we would potentially become attractive partners for distributors. While self-distribution adds significant operational demands to an already labor-intensive business, it is often the most cost-effective and practical way for small manufacturers to build sustainable growth.
- Neighboring states, including Maine and New Hampshire, already provide similar limited self-distribution authority to small brewers. The VBA is seeking comparable, carefully tailored authority for Vermont brewers, **and we respectfully ask you, and your colleagues to support passage of H.921.**
- The three-tier system is failing small manufacturers. Over the past two years, three distributors have closed, leaving only three operating in Vermont (Baker, Farrell, and Vermont Wine Merchants). This consolidation has left a number of small Vermont brewers without access to a distributor. Should further consolidation occur, even more brewers could find themselves without distribution options.
- If manufacturers were allowed direct access to 1st and 2nd class establishments (bars, restaurants and stores), they would have the opportunity to grow their brand, possibly to the extent that they would be attractive to one of the large distributors.
- Adding self-distribution to an already time-consuming manufacturing business is a lot of work, however, it is the most cost-effective way for small brands to intentionally grow their business.

**Very respectfully,
Mike & Heather Drake**

Mike & Heather Drake

1st Republic Brewing Company, LLC, Owners/Manager



Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Urging Support of H.921 and Section 6 Self-Distribution Provisions

1 message

Josh Bayer <joshbayer@foambrewers.com>

Mon, May 18, 2026 at 2:16 PM

To: "jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us" <jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us>

Cc: "ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us" <ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us>, Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Speaker Krowinski,

I'm writing as a member of the Vermont Brewers Association board and as a Vermont manufacturer to urge support for H.921, particularly Section 6 regarding limited self-distribution for small malt beverage manufacturers.

Vermont's small brewing industry is facing a rapidly consolidating distribution landscape. Over the past two years, multiple distributors have closed, leaving very few options for small independent brands seeking access to bars, restaurants, and retail accounts. Many smaller brewers simply cannot secure distribution representation at all.

The self-distribution provision in H.921 offers a practical, limited-scale solution that helps Vermont manufacturers responsibly grow their businesses while remaining competitive with neighboring states like Maine and New Hampshire, where similar self-distribution rights already exist.

For many small breweries, self-distribution is not about bypassing the three-tier system- it is about survival, market access, and the opportunity to build enough brand presence to eventually become viable distributor partners. The bill also includes reporting requirements that provide transparency and accountability.

Vermont's brewing industry contributes meaningfully to local jobs, tourism, agriculture, and our broader small business economy. Supporting H.921 helps ensure that independent Vermont manufacturers have a fair opportunity to compete and grow.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of Vermont small businesses.

Best,

Josh Bayer
VBA Board Member
Head Brewer
Foam Brewers
[112 Lake St](#)



Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Support for H.921

1 message

Nina Hurley <nina@goodmeasurebrewing.com>

Sun, May 17, 2026 at 6:52 PM

To: jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us

Cc: ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us, Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Dear Speaker Krowinski,

I'm reaching out in support of H.921, specifically section 6, to support Vermont's beer industry. Other New England states, such as New Hampshire and Maine, have similar legislation to the proposed bill.

With only two major distributors in the State, smaller breweries are being pushed to the wayside. The proposed bill will allow self-distribution without the need to create a distribution company. Why is this important? Small breweries rarely have the staff or manpower to manage a tap room, brewing, and the paperwork and legwork required for distribution. Even as a mid-sized brewery, we're limited in what the distributors are willing to take and often miss out on opportunities for specialty requests and small batch products.

We recognize this is a big change for the industry, but it's a necessary one. The market, competition, and economy are different from what they were five, ten, or fifteen years ago. It's essential that we push the envelope to create an economic environment in which everyone can compete.

Vermont beer is important. It contributes to tourism, provides jobs, utilizes local produce in our taprooms, and our waste product (spent grain) provides inexpensive (and often free!) feed for farmers. Passing this bill promotes the brewing industry in Vermont. We urge you to pass H.921.

Please reach out to me if you have any questions or need any additional support.

Cheers,
Nina

--

Nina Hurley

Good Measure Pub & Brewery

<https://www.goodmeasurebrewing.com>





Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Supporting H.921, Section 6

1 message

John Boyle <jboyle@idletyebrewing.com>

Mon, May 18, 2026 at 1:45 PM

To: jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us, Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>, ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us

Speaker Krowinski,

My name is John Boyle, and I'm a Vermont brewer. I'm writing to urge you and the House to support H.921, specifically Section 6 relating to limited self-distribution for malt beverage manufacturers.

I understand there are concerns being raised about tied-house issues, and I respect that Vermont needs to be careful with its alcohol laws. But Section 6 is not some radical dismantling of the three-tier system. It is a narrow, practical update that lets Vermont breweries distribute a limited amount of their own beer directly to licensed bars, restaurants, and stores.

That distinction matters. We are not talking about breweries distributing other companies' beer. We are not talking about removing oversight. We are talking about allowing small Vermont manufacturers to build relationships, grow their brands, and survive in a distribution market that has become harder and harder to access.

Right now, the three-tier system is not working equally for small brewers. Distributor consolidation has left fewer options, and small breweries are often not attractive accounts for larger distributors because the volume is too low. That leaves many Vermont breweries stuck. They either take on the burden of creating a separate distribution business just to move small amounts of beer locally, or they lose access to the very restaurants and stores that could help them grow.

Section 6 gives small breweries a realistic path forward. Self-distribution is not easy. It takes time, labor, vehicles, recordkeeping, sales work, and follow-through. No small brewery is going to take that on unless they truly need it. But for the breweries that do need it, it may be the difference between being able to grow intentionally and being locked out of the market.

Neighboring states already understand this. New Hampshire allows smaller manufacturers to self-distribute directly to retailers under its manufacturer license. Maine allows small breweries to sell directly to licensed retailers without going through a wholesaler. Vermont breweries should not be put at a competitive disadvantage in our own region.

I also think the Senate amendment helps answer the oversight concern. Requiring manufacturers to keep distribution records and report annually to the Division makes sense. That keeps the system transparent while still giving small producers a fair chance to compete.

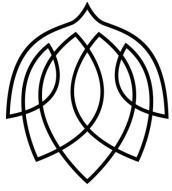
Vermont beer is one of the things this state is known for. It supports jobs, farms, tourism, restaurants, local manufacturing, and community gathering places. But if we want that industry to stay strong, the law has to reflect the reality small breweries are facing today.

Please support H.921 and Section 6. This bill is a reasonable, careful, and necessary step for Vermont's brewing industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

John Boyle

--



John Boyle
Brewer / Idleyme Brewery and Restaurant

☎ 802-253-4765

🌐 www.idletyembrewing.com

✉ Jboyle@idletyembrewing.com

📍 1859 Mountain Road Stowe, Vermont 05672



Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Letter in Support of H.921

1 message

Gracie Harvey <events@kraemerandkin.com>

Tue, May 19, 2026 at 9:21 AM

To: jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us

Cc: ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us, Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Dear Speaker Krowinski,

I am writing as a representative of both Kraemer & Kin brewery and the Vermont Brewers Association, to express my support for [H.921, An act relating to alcoholic beverages](#); particularly, section 6 of this bill. As a small rural brewery with strictly limited time and resources, we are forced to make difficult decisions and sacrifices to remain operational within these limits. Permitting small breweries to directly sell our product to licensed 1st and 2nd class businesses would provide us with critically needed temporal and financial flexibility to remain competitive in a largely unforgiving market.

Adding self-distribution to an already time-consuming manufacturing business is a lot of work, however, it is the most cost-effective way for small brands to intentionally grow their business. Kraemer & Kin currently self distributes our product through our own distribution company. As Levi Kraemer, co-owner and head brewer, advocated in his testimony before the House Government Operations committee in February, the passage of this bill would allow us to redirect critical resources to better supporting our employees, collaborate with more small business owners in Vermont, and focus on what we really do best: building community over thoughtfully crafted beer that celebrates Vermont-grown and produced ingredients.

Neighboring states already allow small manufacturers similar direct access to markets. Allowing Vermont manufacturers to do the same ensures that our businesses are not placed at a competitive disadvantage in the region.

- [NH](#) – In New Hampshire, if you hold a Beverage Manufacturers License and you produce no more than 15,000 barrels annually, you may self-distribute up to 5,000 barrels annually to New Hampshire retailers without getting any special license. [Title XIII, Sec. 178:12 \(IV\)\(b\)](#)
- [ME](#) - In Maine, if you hold a small brewery license (producing up to 30,000 barrels per year), you can sell your beer directly to licensed retailers (restaurants & stores) without needing to get a wholesale licensee. [Title 28-A, Sec. 1355-A \(3\)\(B\)\(2\)](#) (no maximum limit).

The three-tier system is failing small manufacturers. Over the past two years, three distributors have closed, leaving only three operating in Vermont (Baker, Farrell, and Vermont Wine Merchants). This consolidation has left a number of small Vermont brewers without access to a distributor. Should further consolidation occur, even more brewers could be without distribution options. If manufacturers were allowed direct

access to 1st and 2nd class establishments (bars, restaurants and stores), we would have the opportunity to grow our brand, possibly to the extent that our would be attractive to one of the large distributors.

Thank you, Speaker Krowinski, for your time and dedicated attention to this bill. The passage of H.921 gives small businesses a critical infusion of time and financial flexibility, thus into the entire local Vermont economy.

Sincerely,

Gracie Harvey
Board Member, Vermont Brewers Association
Events Coordinator, Kraemer & Kin
North Hero, VT

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Gracie Harvey (she/her)
KRAEMER & KIN
Brewery . Agriculture . Community
[3517 US 2](#)
[North Hero, VT](#)
[kraemerandkin.com](#)
events@kraemerandkin.com

 **Letter in Support of H.921.pdf**
49K



Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Fwd: Please Support Final Passage of H.921

1 message

David Keck <david@stella14wines.com>
To: Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Tue, May 19, 2026 at 9:00 AM

Begin forwarded message:

From: la garagista <lagaragista@gmail.com>
Subject: Please Support Final Passage of H.921
Date: May 18, 2026 at 9:21:50 AM EDT
To: jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us
Cc: ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us, David Keck <david@stella14wines.com>, Kate Cartwright <kate.cartwright@gmail.com>

Dear Speaker Krowinski,

I am writing as both the Vice President of The Vermont Grape and Wine Council as well as a wine producer here in Vermont to express my support for H.921 and to encourage its final passage. I am also attaching my written testimony given to the Senate Committee earlier this spring.

As a Vermont winegrower, winemaker, and small business owner, I see this bill through the lens of what it means to build something rooted here — in agriculture, hospitality, wine production, and community. At Domaine La Garagista our work depends not only on growing grapes and making wine, but also on welcoming visitors, creating experiences around a Vermont agricultural product, and sustaining a viable rural business in an increasingly difficult economic landscape.

For many of us working at a small scale, H.921 represents thoughtful and practical growth. Vermont's beverage producers have changed considerably over the last decade, and our regulatory structures need enough flexibility to reflect the reality of how small producers survive and contribute to local economies. This bill does that without abandoning the safeguards that matter.

H.921 sits firmly within Vermont's regulatory framework, and it supports a system that supports all beverage producers. It preserves meaningful limitations and oversight while giving small producers modest tools to collaborate, reach customers, and strengthen the local economies in which we operate.

For Vermont wineries especially, hospitality and direct connection are essential. We are small agricultural businesses, often operating in rural places where visitors may travel a long distance to experience Vermont wine and the broader culture of food and drink that surrounds it. Limited opportunities to responsibly showcase Vermont wines create stronger experiences for visitors and stronger businesses for everyone involved. This bill is about working within the regulations and helping small producers participate in a local economy that is collaborative by necessity.

This bill has been shaped over years of discussion, testimony, and revision and reflects the broader needs of Vermont's independent beverage producers. In practice, the businesses most constrained are often the smallest and least resourced — the very producers trying to create resilient agricultural production livelihoods here in Vermont.

H.921 offers a careful path forward: supportive of innovation and collaboration, while still grounded in responsibility and oversight. I hope you will support the bill and do what you can to see it through to passage.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of Vermont's agricultural and small business communities.

Sincerely,

Deirdre Heekin
Domaine La Garagista

Vice President
The Vermont Grape and Wine Council

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Domaine La Garagista
farm + winery
barnard + west addison, vermont

lagaragista.com

follow us on instagram: @lagaragista + @cjob

 **Testimony for VT Legislature 2026 Deirdre Heekin, Domaine La Garagista.pdf**

93K



Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Supporting passage of H. 921 - Lot Six Brewing Co - Jeffersonville, VT

1 message

Justin McCarthy <justin@lotsixbrewing.com>

Mon, May 18, 2026 at 12:29 PM

To: jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us

Cc: ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us, Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Good Afternoon, Rep. Krowinski,

My name is Justin McCarthy. I am an owner and the brewer at Lot Six Brewing Company. We are a small brewpub located in Jeffersonville near Smuggler's Notch Resort. I am writing to support the passage of H.921, specifically Section 6, which relates to self-distribution for small brewers.

This bill will directly impact me, my business partner, our families and our employees. We are primarily a brewpub but we need to distribute a small volume of beer to make ends meet. This bill significantly simplifies that process for my business partner and me. Additionally, the small volume of beer we have available doesn't align with the goals of larger distributors seeking high-volume products. Passage of H.921 gives our business a better chance to succeed, which directly correlates to the success of our families, our employees and our community.

While my focus today is on the passage of language in Section 6 of H.921, I want to be clear in my support of H.921 in its entirety. The VBA worked hard to find common ground not just within its own membership but also with several other organizations to help create a well-rounded bill that gives small businesses a better chance at success.

I am happy to discuss the impact of H.921 in more detail. You can reach me by the phone number listed below or by email.
Thank you for your time.

Justin McCarthy
Lot Six Brewing
4087 Vermont 108 South
Jeffersonville, VT 05464
(802)399-7334



Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Lucy and Howe Brewing support for H. 921

1 message

Jesse Cronin <jesse@lucyandhowebrewing.com>
To: jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us, ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us
Cc: Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Sun, May 17, 2026 at 12:08 PM

To House Speaker Jill Krowinski-

My name is Jesse Cronin- for the past 6 years I've owned and operated Lucy and Howe Brewing Company in Jericho VT.

I founded the company in 2020, brewing and packaging beer in a small summer kitchen on our property. In late 2022 I partnered with Brew House Coffee Company to purchase the Jericho General Store and convert it into a shared coffee and beer space. Brewing operations moved over in the summer of 2023, and since then we've been working on a space driven by quality and community.

Out of this small brewhouse I make about 120 barrels of beer a year- to put this in perspective, while working at Magic Hat Brewing I would typically brew that same volume before taking a break for lunch.

I'm writing today in support of H. 921, specifically in support of section 6, the section that would allow a manufacturer like myself the ability to sell and deliver beer I make to retailers, restaurants, and bars.

Currently, my access to a distribution network is limited. In the past two years we've seen three distributors close; I don't make a lot of beer, which can make supply inconsistent depending on the season; the path to self distribution is currently costly, unwieldy, and inconvenient.

The ability to distribute my own beer myself without the current legislative hurdles would be a welcome source of additional income and exposure, especially during slower months. I would be able to work directly with retailers, specifically smaller retailers ones, and care for my product from production to retail sale.

Passing this legislation would also bring us into parity with NH and ME- both states currently allow manufacturers to distribute their own beer to much greater volumes, and have seen no disruption in their manufacturer-distributor-retailer relationships.

The past several years have been a little tough for the craft beer space. I currently struggle with supply issues, delivery fuel surcharges, and a changing consumer landscape of folks increasingly concerned with dwindling purchasing power. Allowing me to distribute, to increase market share without the current regulative requirements would be helpful, to say the least.

If there are any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. My contact information is below.

Best,

Jesse Cronin

Owner/Brewer/Head Cleaner
Lucy and Howe Brewing Company
Jericho VT

802-497-4447

jesse@lucyandhowebrewing.com

Real change is incremental and ordinary; the world can be made a better place through quality, kindness, and action.



Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

FW: Please Support Final Passage of H.921

1 message

Mimi Buttenheim <mimi@madriverdistillers.com>

Sun, May 17, 2026 at 5:57 PM

To: Chris Kesler <chris@blackflannel.com>, "david@stella14wines.com" <david@stella14wines.com>, "lagaragista@gmail.com" <lagaragista@gmail.com>

Cc: Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>, Jessica Oski <oski@necrasongroup.com>, Matt Wilson <matt@zerogravitybeer.com>

Below is the email I just sent to the speaker.



Mimi Buttenheim

President, Mad River Distillers

802-496-6973 | 415-601-0363

www.madriverdistillers.com

mimi@madriverdistillers.com

Warren, VT 05674



From: Mimi Buttenheim

Sent: Sunday, May 17, 2026 5:54 PM

To: 'jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us' <jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us>

Cc: 'ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us' <ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us>

Subject: Please Support Final Passage of H.921

Importance: High

Dear Speaker Krowinski,

I am writing as President of the Distilled Spirits Council of Vermont and as President of Mad River Distillers in Warren. I urge you to support the final passage of H.921, the current alcohol bill.

For small Vermont alcohol manufacturers, this bill matters. It reflects years of work by stakeholders across Vermont's beverage industries, including distillers, brewers, wineries, cideries, restaurants, and other small businesses that depend on local products, tourism, and responsible direct-to-consumer sales.

The provisions in H.921 were not developed casually or at the last minute. They have been discussed, revised, and vetted over several years with stakeholders and regulators, including the Department of Liquor and Lottery. The Department supports the bill, and its support is important because these changes have been carefully considered within Vermont's existing regulatory framework. The bill passed through committees in both the House and Senate unanimously after testimony and review. It is frustrating to see an eleventh-hour attempt to stall the bill now, particularly based on "tied-house" concerns that I believe misunderstand what the bill actually does.

As a small Vermont spirits producer, I care deeply about maintaining fair competition and preserving the guardrails that prevent inappropriate cross-tier influence. A wholesale dismantling of the three-tier system would not be good for Vermont. But H.921 does not do that. The bill is narrow, practical, and still subject to meaningful limitations. For example:

- Only licensed beverage manufacturers may hold Class 4 tasting room licenses.
- Class 4 tasting rooms remain limited in how much alcohol they may serve.
- The bill does not create open-ended bar privileges for manufacturers.
- Self-distribution remains limited and would primarily benefit smaller producers.
- Brands already under franchise agreements with distributors would not be able to bypass those agreements.
- Common ownership rules and distribution limits remain in place to prevent unfair advantages.

For spirits producers, the Class 4 provision is especially important. The ability to purchase products directly from a limited number of other small Vermont manufacturers at up to five Class 4 tasting rooms would help small producers work together, introduce visitors to more Vermont-made products, and strengthen the local beverage economy. This is not about creating tied houses. It is about allowing small manufacturers to collaborate responsibly within a highly regulated system.

I am concerned that delaying or suppressing this bill at this stage would have the unintended consequence of protecting larger, more established players while limiting growth opportunities for smaller and emerging Vermont brands. That would be a real loss for Vermont manufacturing, tourism, hospitality, and rural economic development.

H.921 strengthens Vermont's beverage industries while preserving important safeguards. I respectfully urge you to do everything in your power to move the bill forward and support its final passage.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Best,

Mimi Buttenheim



Mimi Buttenheim

President, Mad River Distillers

802-496-6973 | 415-601-0363

www.madriverdistillers.com

mimi@madriverdistillers.com

Warren, VT 05674





Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Fwd: The importance of H. 921

1 message

David Keck <david@stella14wines.com>
To: Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Tue, May 19, 2026 at 9:00 AM

Begin forwarded message:

From: David Keck <david@stella14wines.com>
Subject: The importance of H. 921
Date: May 18, 2026 at 9:19:29 AM EDT
To: jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us
Cc: ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us

Dear Speaker Krowinski,

My name is David Keck and I'm a resident of Cambridge, Vermont, where I farm grapes and make wine for the Stella14 Wines label that my wife and I created in 2020. I am also the legislative liaison for the Vermont Grape and Wine Council and have spent a fair amount of time in the state house on behalf of grape growers (testifying in the Agriculture committees), wine makers (working with House Government Operations and Senate EDHG), and farmers (testifying on behalf of NOFA and the Working Lands programs).

I am e-mailing in support of the current alcohol bill on the floor, H. 921. This is a bill that my colleagues and I have worked on for several years now. We have worked with our colleagues in the spirits, cider, and beer industries, as well as the Department of Liquor and Lottery and numerous House Representatives and Senators. It has been a truly collaborative process to put together a bill that will support small business owners in Vermont, increase tourism, drive the economy in numerous ways, and increase exposure for Vermont's craft alcohol producers. This is an area that has potential for incredible growth, and this bill helps create parity in the industry and supports all of us in our endeavors to introduce more people to the hard work that we do.

This bill has seen numerous revisions to reach its current state, with intense scrutiny to be sure that it is helpful to all, and operates within the existing systems of checks and balances. It is of great importance to our industry that this continue on its path to completion and we sincerely hope that you and your colleagues will join us in this goal.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
David

DAVID KECK, MS

Owner, Proprietor
@stella14wines
david@stella14wines.com
802.752.0808



Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

H.921 is necessary for the success of small brewers

1 message

Daren Orr <daren@twoheroesbrewery.com>

Sun, May 17, 2026 at 10:07 AM

To: jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us

Cc: ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us, Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Dear Jill,

I want to again voice my **support for H.921, specifically Section 6**, and how it is greatly needed for Vermont Brewers, especially small breweries. The ability to distribute beer without a pass through entity is vital for the success of our businesses and is something that is **already law in all of our neighboring states**.

For example:

- **NH** – In NH if you hold a Beverage Manufacturers License and you produce no more than 15,000 barrels annually, you may self-distribute up to 5,000 barrels annually to New Hampshire retailers without getting any special license. [Title XIII, Sec. 178:12 \(IV\)\(b\)](#)
- **ME** - In Maine, if you hold a small brewery license (producing up to 30,000 barrels per year), you can sell your beer directly to licensed retailers (restaurants & stores) without needing to get a wholesale licensee. [Title 28-A, Sec. 1355-A \(3\)\(B\)\(2\)](#) (no maximum limit).

Alcohol beverage distribution in Vermont has been consolidated to only 3 companies after the closure of multiple other distributors, and one of those three is a wine distributor. The other two (Baker & Farrell) are large companies that carry hundreds of brands and often focus on larger brands.

Allowing self-distribution is crucial for the success of small breweries in Vermont, and will allow those businesses to grow at their own pace while retaining control of their products. I please ask you to help get this bill to the finish line on behalf of Vermont's small brewers!

Thank you,

Daren Orr
Owner / Brewer / Wholesaler
Two Heroes Brewery & Public House
Laughing Water Distributors
C: 802-777-0063, PUB: 802-372-0111
daren@twoheroesbrewery.com



Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Please Support the Passage of H.921

1 message

Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

Mon, May 18, 2026 at 9:07 AM

To: jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us

Cc: ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us, Jessica Oski <oski@necrasongroup.com>

Good Morning Speaker Krowinski,

My name is Emma Arian, and I am the Executive Director of the Vermont Brewers Association (VBA), a nonprofit trade association founded in 1995 to promote and strengthen Vermont's craft brewing industry through advocacy, education, and marketing.

The Vermont Brewers Association represents 58 breweries, more than 90 percent of the breweries in the state. Vermont's craft brewing industry contributes roughly \$460 million annually to our economy and supports approximately 2,800 jobs. But, despite Vermont's national reputation for craft beer, many small breweries are struggling simply to get their product to local markets.

I'm writing today in favor of H.921, and specifically Section 6, which would allow limited self-distribution for Vermont breweries under their existing manufacturer license.

As you know, this proposal has already moved through the Department of Liquor and Lottery, multiple legislative committees, and both chambers. The process has been thoughtful, deliberate, and transparent. Legislators heard testimony from brewers, distributors, industry groups, and regulators before advancing this language. At every stage, Section 6 remained intact because policymakers understood that this is a measured response to real structural challenges facing Vermont's small breweries.

At this point, there appears to be one particularly loud voice continuing to oppose the bill, despite the fact that the Legislature as a whole has already recognized the need for this change. I respectfully urge you not to allow a single opposition perspective to outweigh years of industry discussion, broad stakeholder engagement, and the collective judgment of the committees and chambers that have already approved this legislation.

The distribution landscape has changed dramatically. In just the past two years, Vermont has lost Craft Vermont, Vermont Beer Shepherd, and now Calmont Beverage Company. That leaves only a handful of distributors serving the state, and as consolidation increases, the smallest breweries are the first to lose access to market opportunities.

Section 6 is not an attempt to dismantle the three-tier system. It is a narrowly tailored adjustment that gives small breweries a realistic pathway to build local demand and survive in a rapidly consolidating marketplace.

Under current law, a brewery that wants to self-distribute even a small amount of beer must create and maintain a completely separate distribution company, including separate accounting, taxes, insurance, compliance structures, and annual licensing costs. For small producers, that barrier is often insurmountable.

Section 6 addresses this by allowing breweries to self-distribute up to 3,000 barrels annually under their existing manufacturer license. This is intentionally modest and self-limiting. Most breweries would never approach that threshold because self-distribution itself requires substantial labor, logistics, and cost. The proposal simply gives small businesses the ability to establish local accounts, grow responsibly, and eventually become viable wholesale partners.

Importantly, Vermont would not be an outlier. Maine and New Hampshire already allow limited self-distribution under manufacturer licenses, and both states continue to maintain healthy wholesaler networks. Their systems have not collapsed, nor has the three-tier system been undermined.

Vermont has a long history of carefully modernizing alcohol laws to support small local producers while preserving appropriate regulatory safeguards. In many ways, Section 6 follows the same path forged decades ago by Greg Noonan and Bill Mares when Vermont first allowed breweries to sell beer directly on-site. At the time, that change was also viewed as a meaningful modernization of tied-house laws to reflect the realities of small brewery operations. Today, it is foundational to Vermont's brewing economy.

Section 6 is another thoughtful modernization....not radical, not reckless, but responsive to today's marketplace realities.

I respectfully ask that you stand behind the work already done by the Legislature and support keeping Section 6 intact in H.921.

Thank you for your time and leadership.

Emma Arian

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Emma Arian

Executive Director

Vermont Brewers Association

P.O. Box 701

Richmond, Vermont 05477

973.303.6739



Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>

In Support of H.921, Section 6

1 message

Steve Theoharides <steve@zerogravitybeer.com>

Mon, May 18, 2026 at 10:25 AM

To: jkrowinski@leg.state.vt.us

Cc: Emma Arian <emma@vermontbrewers.com>, ckennedy@leg.state.vt.us

Hello Speaker Krowinski,

My name is Steve Theoharides. I am the Head Brewer at Zero Gravity and I am reaching out in support of H.921, with particular enthusiasm for Section 6 (allowing limited self-distribution for Vermont breweries under their existing manufacturer license).

Section 6 would allow breweries to self-distribute up to 3,000 barrels annually under their existing manufacturer license. This is intentionally modest and self-limiting. Most breweries would never approach that threshold because self-distribution itself requires substantial labor, logistics, and cost. The proposal simply gives small businesses the ability to establish local accounts, grow responsibly, and eventually become viable wholesale partners.

Importantly, Vermont would not be an outlier. Maine and New Hampshire already allow limited self-distribution under manufacturer licenses, and both states continue to maintain healthy wholesaler networks. Their systems have not collapsed, nor has the three-tier system been undermined.

Please consider the following as you evaluate the measure:

- Allowing Vermont manufacturers direct access to markets ensures that our businesses are not placed at a competitive disadvantage in the region.
 - **NH** – In NH if you hold a Beverage Manufacturers License and you produce no more than 15,000 barrels annually, you may self-distribute up to 5,000 barrels annually to New Hampshire retailers without getting any special license. [Title XIII, Sec. 178:12 \(IV\)\(b\)](#)
 - **ME** - In Maine, if you hold a small brewery license (producing up to 30,000 barrels per year), you can sell your beer directly to licensed retailers (restaurants & stores) without needing to get a wholesale licensee. [Title 28-A, Sec. 1355-A \(3\)\(B\)\(2\)](#) (no maximum limit).
- The three-tier system is failing small manufacturers. Over the past two years, three distributors have closed, leaving only three operating in Vermont (Baker, Farrell, and Vermont Wine Merchants). This consolidation has left a number of small Vermont brewers without access to a distributor. Should further consolidation occur, even more brewers could find themselves without distribution options.
- Adding self-distribution to an already time-consuming manufacturing business is a lot of work, however, it is the most cost-effective way for small brands to intentionally grow their business.

As you know, this proposal has already moved through the Department of Liquor and Lottery, multiple legislative committees, and both chambers. The process has been thoughtful, deliberate, and transparent. Legislators heard testimony from brewers, distributors, industry groups, and regulators before advancing this language. At every stage, Section 6 remained intact because policymakers understood that this is a measured response to real structural challenges facing Vermont's small breweries.

Section 6 is not an attempt to dismantle the three-tier system. It is a narrowly tailored adjustment that gives small breweries a realistic pathway to build local demand and survive in a rapidly consolidating marketplace. And the need for self-distribution privileges is widely recognized within our brewing community, with 57 of 58 members of the Vermont Brewers Association in favor. As a legislator, I am sure you understand how elusive consensus can be, even within one's own caucus. Though dissenting opinions should be considered, the recently expressed opposition to the bill isn't the voice of a sizeable minority but rather a *lone* vote.

Having brewed in this special place for nearly twenty years, I have watched our brewing community flourish through its creative, hardworking, independent, eclectic, and industrious spirit. While inspired and augmented by these historic Vermont values, our brewing community shares the challenges felt across the state today. Tools are needed to support our small manufacturers. Simply put, H.921 Section 6 would act as a lifeline for our smaller brewers in a shifting distribution and consumer landscape.

It is worth noting that Zero Gravity would not benefit from self-distribution privileges. I am rather writing in support of the broader Vermont brewing community, and respectfully ask that you stand behind the work already done by the Legislature and support keeping Section 6 intact in H.921.

Kind regards,

Steve Theoharides



Steve Theoharides

Head Brewer

Zero Gravity Craft Brewery

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