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Vermont's Baker Distributing Acquires Calmont, Leaving 2 Beer Distributors in the State

***Jessica Infante** | Apr. 10, 2026 at 10:35 AM*

Craft Beer

Distribution

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Molson Coors-aligned Baker Distributing acquired fellow Vermont blue/silver network house Calmont Beverage last month, according to a memo to suppliers obtained by Brewbound.

Baker VP and general manager Al McPherson confirmed the sale.

The deal has brought the Green Mountain state's distributor count to two: Baker, which operates warehouses in Colchester and North Clarendon, and Anheuser-Busch InBev-aligned Farrell Distributing, which operates warehouses in South Burlington and Rutland. In addition to their mega brands, both distributors carry a variety of national, regional and local craft offerings.

Both Farrell and Baker distribute wine, cider and spirits-based, ready-to-drink (RTD) cocktails, in addition to beer. Traditional spirits flow through Vermont's Division of Liquor Control, which ceded sales of RTDs to non-control outlets in 2022 (<https://www.brewbound.com/news/vermont-passes-bill-to-lower-taxes-and-widen-access-to-spirits-based-rtDs/>). The state's third beverage-alcohol distributor, Vermont Wine Merchants, does not sell beer, according to its website (<https://vtwinemerchants.com/>).



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Calmont's sale to Baker closed on March 12, according to the email sent by former Calmont co-owner Jamie Semprebon to suppliers.

"As a smaller family owned business for over 80 years, we have done our best to stay competitive, relevant and most of all worthy of carrying your names as they are attached to ours," Semprebon wrote. "The struggles financially, and pressures at retail have forced us to make the difficult choice on behalf of everyone involved to let Baker take over your respective brands and continue servicing the state of Vermont accordingly."

Calmont's status with the Vermont Secretary of State's Business Services Division is "active – NOT in good standing" (caps theirs), and the division sent the wholesaler a letter that its status was terminated for not filing an annual report by March 15, 2026.

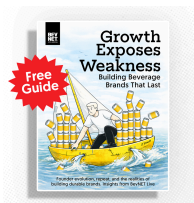
Calmont was founded in 1941 as a vehicle to distribute California wines "to quench the thirst of Vermont's community of Italian granite quarry workers," according to its website (<https://www.calmontbeverage.com/about/>), which notes that its name is a portmanteau of California and Vermont. The wholesaler's wine-heavy portfolio includes 2,000 wine brands and 200 beer brands.



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The distributor's closing eliminated 67 jobs, according to a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act filing made on January 22 (https://www.vermontjoblink.com/search/warn_lookups/357). It's unclear if any of those employees were offered roles with Baker.

Suppliers in Calmont's book were given consent waivers to transfer to Baker. Semprebon urged suppliers to sign as quickly as possible, claiming it "is in [their] favor to do [so], as the interruption at retail is impacted the longer it takes to execute this transition."

In a letter to Calmont suppliers obtained by Brewbound, Baker touted that its 250 employees across two locations are "fully equipped to continue to deliver exceptional service and results in the field."

"As a company we have seamlessly acquired many brands and distributors over the years, making us uniquely qualified to handle this transition," Baker continued. "With brands such as Molson Coors, Constellation, Boston Beer, Gallo and Polar Beverages, Baker delivers the highest level of service

and execution for all brands in our Beer, Non-alcoholic, Wine and RTD portfolios. Everyone at Baker Distributing acknowledges that change is difficult, and we are here to guide you through every step of the process.”

However, several suppliers have told Brewbound they were refused representation with Baker, leaving them without an avenue to sell in Vermont, including Massachusetts-based Hangar Pub Brewing, whose portfolio includes Amherst Brewing, Libation Ginger Beer, Katalyst Kombucha and Katalyst Craft Soda.

“The sale of Calmont to Baker left us dead in the water in Vermont, so none of our alcohol brands are available in the state anymore,” Hangar brands manager Jason Hunter told Brewbound. “Baker showed no interest in bringing it on, and Farrell had previously released the brand and had no interest in bringing it back. We’re left with no viable options for the state at this time.”

New Hampshire-based Kettlehead Brewing is in a similar lurch, owner Sam Morrissette told Brewbound. Baker told him “with the headwinds in craft beer, they are skeptical about taking on more brands.”

“We do have several customers in Vermont, especially near the New Hampshire border, that carried our beer and have inquired about how to get it again,” he added. “Unfortunately, we can’t get them any beer at this point because of Baker’s decision.”

Other brands in Calmont’s book with an uncertain future in the Green Mountain State include the Massachusetts-based Hendler Family Brewing portfolio (Jack’s Abby Craft Lagers, Night Shift and Wormtown) and Vermont-based Liambro Ale Co.

Several other brands listed on Calmont’s still-active website (<https://www.calmontbeverage.com/beer/>) also appear in Baker’s portfolio (<https://www.bakerdistributing.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/04/BBP-0426-WEB.pdf>), including Vermont breweries Mill River, Red Barn, Woodstock Inn and Rock Art; and Maine Beer Company.

Vermont’s middle tier has undergone intense consolidation in recent years, which leaves smaller craft breweries with dwindling routes to market.

In April 2025, craft distributor VT Beer Shepherd (<https://www.brewbound.com/news/vt-beer-shepherd-ceases-operations-baker-distributing-acquires-part-of-portfolio-including-lawsons/>) abruptly shuttered and sold the distribution rights of Vermont-based Lawson’s Finest Liquids to Baker. Following the sale, Lawson’s shuttered its self-distribution arm, The Beer Guy, to go statewide with Baker, which has helped boost the brand to double-digit gains (<https://www.brewbound.com/news/lawsons-finest-liquids-caps-2025-with-15-8-growth-in-grocery-recertifies-b-corp-standing>) in its home state.

Sheehan Family Companies shuttered its Craft Vermont subsidiary in November 2023 (<https://www.brewbound.com/news/sheehan-family-to-sell-craft-vermont/>), one of many sales in the company’s previously vast stable of craft-focused distributors. Craft Vermont’s brand rights were sold piecemeal to Baker and Farrell.

Massachusetts-headquartered Craft Collective attempted to diversify Vermont's middle tier by opening a warehouse there in March 2022 (<https://www.brewbound.com/news/craft-collective-expands-to-vermont-picks-up-distribution-rights-to-vermont-beer-makers/>). But the move appears to be short-lived. The Business Services Division lists Craft Collective's Vermont offshoot terminated as of April 2023.

Both in-state and out-of-state brewers are permitted to ship beer directly to consumers (DTC) in Vermont, according to the Brewers Association's (BA) website (<https://www.brewersassociation.org/government-affairs/legal-resources/direct-to-consumer-shipping-laws/>). Shipments are capped at 12 cases, containing no more than 36 gallons, in a calendar year, and must be delivered via common carriers.

A bill to expand the state's limited self-distribution privileges, H.921 (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2026/H.921>), passed Vermont's House of Representatives and moved to the Senate on March 24. The bill would grant Vermont brewers the ability to distribute up to 5,000 barrels of beer annually without the administrative rigors currently required.

"To self-distribute today, a brewery must form a separate distribution company, maintain separate books and tax filings, carry additional insurance and pay an annual license fee of roughly \$1,200, all to deliver relatively small amounts of beer locally," Vermont Brewers Association (VBA) executive director Emma Arian wrote in an info sheet about the bill.

In it, Arian illustrated how H.921 would bring Vermont into parity with neighboring states, which "already recognize that limited self-distribution is essential for small producers." In New Hampshire, brewers whose annual output is fewer than 15,000 barrels can distribute up to 5,000 barrels. Maine breweries producing fewer than 30,000 barrels "may sell directly to licensed retailers without a wholesale license," she wrote.

"These states maintain strong wholesaler networks, and limited self-distribution has not undermined the three-tier system," Arian wrote.

Vermont has a strong craft beer industry for its size, and its 75 craft breweries generated \$460 million in economic impact in 2025. The state ranks first in breweries per capita (15.4 per 100,000 legal-drinking-age [LDA] adults) and in per capita consumption (21.8 gallons per 100,000 LDA adults).

The majority of VBA members (58.2%) produced fewer than 500 barrels in 2025. Only about a quarter (23.7%) produce more than 2,000 barrels, Arian noted.

The VBA views self-distribution as a stepping stone for craft brewers to become "attractive to one of the large distributors," Arian wrote in testimony

(<https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Workgroups/House%20Government%20Operations/Bills/H.921/Witness%20Documents/H.921~Emma%20Arian~Follow-up%20to%20Testimony~2-11-2026.pdf>) to members of the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs.

"Adding self-distribution to an already time-consuming manufacturing business is a lot of work," she added. "However, it is the most cost-effective way for small brands to intentionally grow their business."

The BA backs the VBA's efforts to expand self-distribution.

“Especially in light of further consolidation of the middle tier, it is imperative that brewers have the opportunity for self-distribution,” BA state government affairs director Sam DeWitt said in a statement provided to Brewbound. “Small and independent brewers should be limited only by their ability and motivation to reach consumers where they are.”

The Vermont Legislature is slated to adjourn May 8.