

Chairman and members of the Industry, Business and Labor Committee,

My name is Tyler Seim, I am the owner and distiller at Red Pine Distillery, a small craft distillery located in Grand Forks. As a craft distillery I take in local agricultural products, such as sugar beets, wheat, corn, and barley, and turn them into distilled spirits like vodka, rum, gin, and whiskey. This process allows me to create products that are high in quality and represent our region and state proudly. North Dakota boasts a great business environment and I want to thank all of you and the previous legislatures for creating an environment that is supportive of small distillers such as myself.

Under current law, domestic distilleries are allowed to operate what we refer to as a tasting room. A place where consumers can visit, sample products, enjoy cocktails, and purchase off sale of all the products that distillery makes. However, it is difficult to find a location capable of performing that function that is also suitable for distilled spirits production as the needs of each activity are vastly different. Allowing domestic distilleries to operate a satellite tasting room gives us the opportunity to position ourselves in front of consumers more effectively and increase our direct to consumer interaction to tell them our story and grow our business. This opportunity would allow us to engage with not just the local residents, but visitors to our region that we would not otherwise get to connect with. Those visitors often times take our products home with them and share amongst friends and family, creating interest in our products and extending our sales market which brings money back into our city and state to reinvest. The more direct interaction we can have with these people, the more our business grows. I ask the committee to vote in favor of this legislation to allow myself and other distillery owners in our state to expand their reach to consumers and grow their businesses. Thank you for taking the time to read this testimony and discuss this important legislation.