

Free the Grapes!: Maryland Wine Lovers Needed at Two Important Hearings on Direct Wine Shipping

March 3, 2010, Napa, CA – Maryland wine lovers are encouraged to make their voices heard by testifying at two upcoming General Assembly public hearings on direct wine shipments. House and Senate Committee passage of these bills could pave the way for more wines from across the U.S. getting into Maryland. www.freethegrapes.org

On Friday, March 5 the House Economic Matters Committee will hear testimony on House Bill 716 (Krysiak); the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee will hear testimony on Senate Bill 566 (Raskin) on Wednesday, March 17. These important hearings are the first steps toward replacing Maryland's archaic law that bans in and out-of-state wineries from shipping wine directly to Maryland consumers.

House Bill 716 and Senate Bill 566 are based on a model direct shipping bill and are getting a lot of attention in Annapolis and beyond. These bills are co-sponsored by a majority of the Maryland House (81 of 141 Delegates) and the Senate (26 of 47 Senators). Senate co-sponsors include six of the nine members of the Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee. Without question, Marylanders and their elected officials want this law. Consumers in 35 states and DC already have access to wine sent by direct shipments. These states' laws satisfy consumer demand for hard-to-find wines, ensure minors do not have access to alcohol, and create new sources of state tax revenue. If passed, Maryland's law will do the same.

Maryland House Hearing Details:

What: House Bill 716 – Alcoholic Beverages - Direct Wine Shipper's License
Who: House Economic Matters Committee
When: Friday, March 5, 2010; 1:00 PM Eastern
Location: House Office Building, Room 230, Annapolis, MD 21401-1991
Details: Anyone wishing to testify must sign the witness register by 12:40 PM

Maryland Senate Hearing Details:

What: Senate Bill 566 - Alcoholic Beverages - Direct Wine Shipper's License
Who: Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
When: Wednesday, March 17, 2010; 1:00 PM Eastern
Location: 2 West Miller Senate Building, 11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD 21401-1991
Details: Anyone wishing to testify must sign the witness register by 12:40 PM

For more information, visit www.freethegrapes.org

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