

Rhode Island Legislators Consider Removing Archaic “Winery Visit Penalty” for Wine Direct Shipments

Why Should Rhode Islanders Have to Receive Wine in MA or CT?

April 12, 2016, Napa, CA – Two bills introduced in Rhode Island promise to remove an archaic provision requiring consumers to visit a winery before receiving a shipment of wine directly from that winery. Of the 43 states and the District of Columbia that allow winery-to-consumer shipments, only Rhode Island and Arkansas include the winery visit penalty. Arizona’s Governor Ducey signed a bill March 31, 2016 which will eliminate this burden for Arizona consumers.

“Rhode Island’s current statute effectively bans winery-to-consumer shipments, and is a money-loser for the state,” said Jeremy Benson, executive director, Free the Grapes! “Why should Rhode Island wine lovers have to visit a winery in order to order wine, or drive to a neighboring, legal state to pick up their wine shipment? It makes no sense, and the state is losing tax revenues on these shipments.”

Senate Bill 2072 and House Bill 7620 are currently in committee. These bills would replace the current statute with language that has proven successful in the majority of U.S. states. The proposed provisions include, among others, that an in-state or out-of-state winery first obtain a shipping license from the state, that it limits shipments to personal use only, that taxes are collected and remitted by wineries to the state, that all boxes are labeled and require an adult signature, and that the licensed winery consents to the jurisdiction of the state.

About Free the Grapes!

Founded in 1998, Free the Grapes! is a national movement of consumers, wineries and retailers seeking to expand consumer choice in wine with legal, regulated direct shipments. To receive email updates visit www.freethegrapes.org or www.facebook.com/FreetheGrapes

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