



Free the Grapes Delaware: Help make 2018 the year for direct wine shipments

Make your voice heard; House Bill 165 public hearing April 25, 2018

April 19, 2018—Napa, CA – Delaware is one of only six states that still prohibit winery-to-consumer shipments. Direct wine shipping bills have been introduced before the Delaware General Assembly for a decade, but each has failed to make it out of committee. But that could change in 2018. On Wednesday, April 25, **House Bill 165** will be heard by the House Administration Committee. Delaware's wine lovers are invited to make comment in person, by email and by phone.

"House Bill 165 is a carryover from 2017 and would, if passed, replace Delaware's archaic ban on winery direct shipments with language proven successful in the majority of U.S. states," said Jeremy Benson, executive director of Free the Grapes!, the national movement of consumers, wineries and retailers seeking to expand consumer choice in wine with legal, regulated direct to consumer shipments. "In its current form, the bill is not ideal because it would ban direct-to-consumer shipment of wines already for sale in Delaware. But we are hoping it would be amended and improved on the House floor. First, though, HB 165 needs to get out of the Administration Committee and to do that we need wine enthusiasts to contact the committee's five members."

Be Heard! Public Hearing Scheduled for In-Person Testimony

WHEN: Wednesday, April 25 at 2:30 pm before the House Administration Committee

WHERE: House Majority Caucus Room (Room H130), 1st Floor
Legislative Hall: 411 Legislative Avenue, Dover, DE 19901

DETAILS: Speakers are limited to five minutes and should bring 10 copies of their testimony. For inclusion in the meeting packet given to legislators, written testimony should be submitted one day before the hearing to Committee Chair Valerie Longhurst at Valerie.Longhurst@state.de.us. For specific questions about the hearing, call (302) 744-4531. Parking is available adjacent to Legislative Hall. A valid ID is required to enter the building.

Email or Call the House Administration Committee

Delaware's wine lovers are also asked to email or call the five members of the House Administration Committee. Email addresses and phone numbers can be found here. <https://bit.ly/2viH9sR>

Model direct shipping legislation, similar to House Bill 165, is working successfully in 44 states and the District of Columbia, which represents nearly 94% of the population. The laws provide additional tax revenues, satisfy consumer demand, and meet regulatory requirements in a dynamic marketplace. Contrary to arguments stating otherwise, removing barriers to winery-to-consumer shipping does not hurt local retailers or beverage wholesalers. On the other hand, regulated wine shipping does boost tax collections, a benefit to the state and local economy.

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.freethegrappes.org.

#

Media Contact

Jeremy Benson, executive director, Free the Grapes!, 707.254.1107, fedup@freethegrappes.org