

FREE THE GRAPES!

— TO ENSURE CONSUMER CHOICE IN FINE WINE —

Will Delaware Finally Uncork DTC Wine Shipments in 2024?

Free the Grapes! Urges Lawmakers to Pass House Bill 262

New York, NY (April 3, 2024) - There is hope on the horizon that Delaware may join the majority of the rest of the nation in allowing direct to consumer winery shipments. Along with Mississippi and Utah, Delaware continues an archaic ban on these shipments, curbing consumer choice and missing out on positive economic impacts for businesses and the state alike.

The good news is that [Delaware House Bill 262](#) would allow for limited, regulated DTC shipments from American wineries licensed by the state to do so, a model which has proven successful in other states. HB 262 is sponsored by Delaware Representative Michael Smith with additional sponsors including Senator Pettyjohn, and Representatives Giltner, Chukwuocha, Gray, Morrison, Neal, Schwarzkopf, and D. Short. The bill is in the House Economic Development/Banking/Insurance & Commerce Committee and is aiming to be heard on April 30.

“Delaware consumers continue to face needless restrictions on how they purchase and enjoy wine,” said Thea Schlendorf, executive director of [Free the Grapes!](#), a national grassroots coalition of wine lovers and wineries who seek to remove bans and streamline restrictions. “We hope that at this time next year, Delawareans will be able to enjoy special wines purchased directly from their favorite American winery,” she added.

According to the 2023 Silicon Valley Bank Report, in 2022 the DTC channel comprised at least 60% of total wine sales for the wineries whose production is under 30,000 cases. This group represents ~90% of the wine industry, and there are many instances where direct to consumer shipments may be the only way for Delaware wine lovers to enjoy these wines, as they are not always available at retail. HB 262 provides the best framework for allowing regulated DTC shipments into the state and supports greater freedom of choice for consumers.

About Free the Grapes!

Founded in 1998, Free the Grapes! is a national movement of consumers and wineries seeking to expand consumer choice in wine with legal, regulated DTC shipments. <https://freethegrapes.org>

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