

ILLINOIS WINESM

Illinois Grape Growers & Vintners Alliance (IGGVA)

May 6, 2025

The Honorable Members of the Illinois General Assembly
Springfield, IL

Dear Honorable Members,

We, the undersigned Illinois wineries and industry supporters, write to express our strong **support for HB3172**, which aims to reform the outdated production and self-distribution limits that currently restrict our industry's growth and competitiveness.

The current system imposes an unjust restraint on Illinois wineries by limiting self-distribution rights to those producing no more than 25,000 gallons annually. This cap forces many of our wineries to artificially limit their production levels solely to preserve their right to self-distribute, stifling potential growth and innovation. Producing even one drop more than this cap forces wineries to rely exclusively on distributors, most of whom have demonstrated a lack of commitment to promoting Illinois wines effectively. This not only hampers our ability to reach consumers but also jeopardizes jobs and state tax revenues.

To illustrate the restrictive nature of these limits, consider the analogy of nurturing a child. Just as a child should be allowed to grow and develop without artificial constraints, Illinois wineries should be free to expand their production and market presence without sacrificing their ability to self-distribute. The current system is akin to requiring a child to remain in clothes and shoes meant for a much younger age, limiting their potential and opportunities.

Illinois wineries contribute significantly to the state's economy, generating over \$1.6 million annually in excise tax revenue alone, based on a 2019 economic impact study conducted by John Dunham & Associates. However, the current economic crisis, compounded by major distributor restructuring and layoffs, underscores the urgent need for reform. As industry expert Rob McMillan of Silicon Valley Bank notes, "Distributors can't be successful selling bottles of fine wine from small producers." This reality, combined with the abandonment of premium wine segments by major distributors, makes it imperative to protect Illinois wineries' market access and economic stability.

Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Alliance

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By aligning our production and self-distribution limits with those of distillers and brewers, we can foster a more equitable business environment, promote healthy competition, and unlock further economic potential. This reform would allow every winery in Illinois, including all of us listed below, to increase production without sacrificing their ability to self-distribute, thereby enhancing their market access and economic stability.

On behalf of ALL Illinois winery and vineyard operations, not just the undersigned, we urge you to pass HB3172 to address these systemic inequities and ensure that Illinois wineries can thrive alongside other craft beverage industries in the state. This legislation is crucial for safeguarding existing jobs, creating new employment opportunities, enhancing the overall economic stability of our industry and opening a path to increased tax revenues for the State of Illinois.

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to working together to advance this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Illinois Grape Growers and Vintners Alliance

Illinois Manufacturers Association

National Association of Wine Retailers

Craft Wine Association

The non-inclusive list of wineries on the next page have expressed they would immediately experience direct economic growth from this legislation.

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Illinois Wineries in Support of HB3172

Organization	City	Established	Contact/Owner
Alto Vineyards, Ltd	Alto Pass	1988	Daniel Renzaglia
Kitehill Inc.	Carbondale	2006	Barbara A. Bush
VIN312 Winery	Chicago	2016	James DeJulio / Warner DeJulio
City Winery Chicago	Chicago	2012	Caroline Schrader
Wild Blossom Meadery and Winery	Chicago	2017	Greg Fischer
StarView Vineyards	Cobden	2006	Brett and Regina Morrison
Lavender Crest Winery	Colona	2004	Ron Belshause
Clad & Cordon Vineyard	Creal Springs	2024	David Hill
Massbach Ridge, LLC	Elizabeth	2003	Peggy Harmston
MCG Winery and Brewery	Elk Grove Village	2020	Michael Goeringer
Galena Cellars Vineyard and Winery	Galena	1983	Eric White and Britt White
Grafton Winery	Grafton	2008	Mike and Lori Nikonovich
Hidden Hills Vineyards, LLC	Galesburg	2007	David Poland
Lasata Wines	Lawrenceville	2004	Brett and Diana Robling
Mackinaw Valley Vineyard	Mackinaw	2003	Diane L. Hahn
Feather Hills Vineyard	Makanda	2017	Randall Feather
Blue Sky Vineyards, LLC	Makanda	2003	James T. Ewers
Warren James Winery	Mattoon	2023	Cole Pierce
Baxter's Vineyards & Winery	Nauvoo	1857	Kelly, Brenda, and Kimberly Logan
Danenberger Family Vineyards	New Berlin	2012	Susan Sullivan Danenberger
Arpeggio Winery	Pana	2015	Karen Swiney
August Hill Winery	Peru	2002	Mark Wenzel
West of Wise Winery	Petersburg	2015	Darrell and Tina Simmermaker
The Pour Vineyard	Red Bud	2016	Michael Pour
Hopewell Winery	Rockport	2007	Jeremy Wombles
Sable Creek Winery	Romeoville	2019	Bill and Sandra Harris
Lynfred Winery	Roselle	1979	Andres Basso
Land of Lincoln Winery	Springfield	2018	Court Conn
Tres Rojas Wines, LLC	Washington	2016	Robert Barry