Overview

The information in this document can be used for background material when contacting your legislator. It is organized into the following sections:

- Overall Goal
- Core Reasons for Legislative Changes
- Background on Home Beer and Wine Production
- Background on Home Beer and Wine Legislation
- Current Legislation Concerns/Rationale for Changing Legislation
- Proposed Legislation Will Not
- Proposed Legislation Will

Rationale for Proposed Changes to Washington State Homemade Beer and Wine RCWs

Overall Goal:

Promote Washington's homemade beer & wine production community and image with concise, logical regulations.

Core Reasons for Legislative Changes:

- Create an environment fostering community-based improvement for the future leaders of Washington's tax-generating craft beer and wine industries
- Allow enjoyment of homemade beer and wine as a savored and respected component of Washington culture
- Allow grass-roots community involvement in home and craft production movements.
- Allow for clear application with consistent and practical regulation wording

Background on Home Beer and Wine Production:

- Does not promote home beer or wine maker's contributions to Washington's beer or wine industry or a craft-inspired respect of alcoholic beverage production
- Home production of beer and wine has a long history in American tradition
- Beer had been brewed in peoples homes since the dawn of agriculture several thousand years ago
- In colonial times, homebrewing was a common household practice
- Winemaking is a ancient practice with strong cultural and religious ties

- Home wine and beer making is safe and fun
- There are no known pathogens that can survive in beer or wine
- The brewing and winemaking processes are safe
- Unlike distilling, does not involve the production of flammable liquids and does not involve high pressures

- Mix of chemistry, art, and culture

- Americans make homemade beer and wine for a wide variety of reasons
- Creativity and Art
- Ability to create specific styles and flavor profiles
- Tailor processes and ingredients

- Knowledge and Science
- Brewing appeals to individuals who love complex chemistry, fluid dynamics, and thermodynamics
- Good winemaking involves excellent process control and careful monitoring of critical chemical levels
- Brewers and winemakers frequently engineer and create their own custom set-ups

- Cultural and Historical
- Homebrew and wine is a natural extension of sharing cultural aspects in our meals and celebration
- Part of our past and present culture

- What are home beer and wine makers like?
- Leading supporters of local small commercial craft breweries and wineries, which

contribute jobs and tax dollars to their communities and which typically support charitable causes in their communities

- Home beer and wine makers are responsible consumers of alcohol
- Have a deep knowledge of the ingredients of beer and the brewing, winemaking, and fermentation process
- Primary reason for consuming beer and wine is to enjoy the diverse array of flavors and aromas

- Very well aware of the affects of alcohol & their personal limits
- Are more responsible than most other consumers of alcohol
- Serve as examples to others for how to consume alcohol in a responsible manner

- Serve as the training ground for future commercial brewers and winemakers

- Washington Homebrewers
- Estimated 11,500 people who have homebrewed at least once
- 24+ Homebrew and Winemaking Clubs
- 70+ Certified Beer Judges
- 17 Supply Stores
- 10-12 Competitions Annually
- Club and fair organized
- Many 100+ entry competitions
- Competitions where local breweries scale up and brew homebrew recipes

Background on Home Beer and Wine Legislation:

- Homemade Beer and Wine Legislative Overview
- Home wine making approved after repeal of Prohibition
- Homebrewing legalized in 1978 correcting clerical error in Prohibition repeal wording
- National law allows production of 100 gallons / year per person
- 200 gallons / year per household with 2 or more adults

- States allowed to establish further regulation on licensing and transportation

Current Legislation Concerns/Rationale for Changing Legislation:

- Does not promote home beer or wine maker's contributions to Washington's beer or wine industry or a craft-inspired respect of alcoholic beverage production.
- Fostering Washington's homemade beer and wine producers breeds its future craft beer and wine producers and corresponding tax revenue base. [1] [2] [3] [4]
- Quote from Brewer's Association Representative:
- "Homebrewers are the leading advocates for local brewers. Homebrewers are often the volunteers and in many cases the organizers of beer festivals (the American Homebrewers Association founded the Great American Beer Festival before there was a professional division of the organization). We would not have held the World Beer Cup/Craft Brewers Conference in Seattle in 2006 if there were not homebrewers there to help with the event."

- Homemade beer and wine makers have a deep knowledge of the ingredients of beer and wine and the fermentation process also understand that the primary reason for consuming beer is to enjoy the diverse array of flavors and aromas that can be found in beer or wine - they approach the product much like wine connoisseurs approach fine wine, as a delicacy to be savored.
- Homemade brewers and vintners are very well aware of the affects of alcohol and their personal limits. As a result are more responsible than most other consumers of alcohol.

- Does not allow sharing of homemade beer or wine between citizens outside of the house of production.
- Homemade beer or wine is part of a craft production movement, like home production of food such as bread, staples celebrated as a part of a culture.
- Throughout American history, homemade beer or wine has been part of a culture of sharing, treated equally with "communally produced" beer or wine. Many of the Nation's founding fathers were homebrewers
- George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin

- Sharing of home or craft produced goods promotes community involvement and nurtures American culture.

- Prevents Washington from opportunities to host tourism events such as the National Homebrewers Conference (~1,000 attendees)
- Conference brings in close to 1,000 homebrewers from around the country for 4-5 days of dissemination of homebrewing knowledge.
- Stimulates local economy and promotes brewing industry in Washington.
- Brewery tours to local breweries.
- Pro-Brewers Night: Featuring beers brewed by local brewers.

- Does not allow for Club Night: Clubs from around the country bring in kegs of homebrew for sharing and evaluation (prohibited under current transport limitations)
- Resulted in loss of 2009 bid for National Homebrewers Conference.

- Quote from Brewer's Association Representative:
- "The restriction on homebrew being available outside the home for judging purposes only will keep the AHA National Homebrewers Conference out of Washington. Until we can be assured that homebrewers will be allowed to bring more than 5 gallons each and that they will be able to serve it to conference attendees, the conference will not be held in the State of Washington."

- Places homemade beer or wine as a "secondary" product, below that of macro-produced beer and wine.
- Possible to transport and share "Bud" but not carefully crafted homemade beer or wine.
- Prohibits social gatherings of homemade beer or wine producers.
- ~30 homemade beer and wine clubs in Washington which technically can not openly share, taste, and nurture improvement of homemade produced beer and wine.

- Does not consistently apply to beer and wine events, consider typical transport containers of homemade beer or wine, or consider "practical application" of regulations rendering code impossible to meaningfully enforce and extremely difficult to confidently comply with.
- Inconsistent wording throughout RCW
- References frequently only addressing wine instead of both homemade beer and wine.
- Example from RCW 66.28.140: Removing homemade **beer or wine** from home for exhibition or use at **wine** tastings or competitions - legislation should consistently refer to both "beer and wine."

- Inconsistent references to exhibitions, tastings, and competitions
- Verbiage in RCS 66.28.140 Section 1 B essentially only applies for judging, not exhibitions or tastings, despite section name.

- Homemade beer or wine is typically produced in 5 gallons increments and is frequently dispensed from 5 gallon Cornelius kegs - non-compliant with 1 gallon limitation.
- Logistically impossible to return entries from competitions (entries dropped off from broad geographic areas). Imposing a mandatory return of unused entries to homemade premises would create a logistical burden on the competition organizers or entrants as to completely deter competition organization or entry. This degrades the only source of communal feedback on homemade beer or wine production.

- Does not promote collaborative homemade beer or wine evaluation and improvement.
- Competitions under the widely accepted Beer Judge Certification Program or UC Davis Scoring Criteria have the primary focus on evaluating technical merit of particular style profiles. There is a very limited capability to provide constructive feedback, particularly without information from the beer or wine maker. This limits improvement of production techniques.
- Improvement and education most commonly come from peer-to-peer interaction and feedback. Competitions are not in-person and whatever feedback one can get from a competition is very limited at best.
- Isolation creates stagnation in beer and wine production knowledge development leading to poor development of future craft beer and wine producers in Washington.

Proposed Legislation Will Not:

- Change amount of homemade beer or wine produced per household.
- Allow access to homemade beer or wine to minors.

Legislation Will:

- Stimulate Washington's craft beer and wine industry's future craft brewers and vintners
- Today's homemade beer and wine producers are tomorrow's craft beer and wine producers

- Allow Washington to be a candidate for the National Homebrewers Conference and other tourism generating events
- Promote Washington's pioneering beer and wine heritage
- Promote sharing and dissemination of homemade beer and wine making knowledge
- Promote responsibility in beer and wine consumption

- Allow community involvement in home and craft production movements
- Correctly and consistently phrase terminology regarding homemade beer and wine production

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[1] Of the 1442 breweries registered in the country, 97 are in Washington. - Brewers Association

[2] Washington is the number 2 producer of wine in America. - Washington Wine Commission

[3] 90+% of craft brewers begin as homebrewers - Brewers Association estimate

[4] ~11,500 people who have at one point homebrewed in Washington - Compiled using 2000 census demographics compiled with Brewers Association estimate of homebrewers. Actual number for Washington is probably higher due to strength of brewing culture.