

I am writing on behalf of my company Stafford Beverage. We are a four-year-old family owned and operated company based in Aurora, OR with stores in N. Wilsonville and E. Salem (#1264 and #1157). My hopes of writing are in gaining your support of HB2740. As the world around us has changed immensely this past year it shows that we as liquor agents play an increased role in the State of Oregon's revenue stream. While most took time off, forced to close or shift to an at-home new way of life, we stayed true to what we know. Helping customers and being available for what was asked of us. Despite being given an opportunity to cut hours, close, etc., we forged ahead, in turn seeing an increase of nearly 50% in our walk-in traffic in Salem and 40% in Wilsonville. If not mistaken, the OLCC system grew by roughly \$80mm in 2020. This is impressive given we are in an almost yearlong COVID pandemic and bars/restaurants are on life support. Not to mention the wildfires that wreaked havoc on our state, as well as the forced closures and demise of many of our wonderful bars and restaurants. Thru all of this we as owners and proprietors have had to step up due to the massive shift in our consumer sales and improve/expand our staff, efficiencies, hourly wages, incentives, and hours to make it happen. With approximately 20 employees we have had to incentivize employees with hazard pay just to show up, implement sales incentives, provide loads of PPE, etc. We have also had to balance remodeling and expanding our footprint and becoming a bigger presence in the OLCC system. None of these have come without additional expense.

The forcing of business expenses such as a high minimum wage, pressures to run longer hours, expand and remodel all come at a major expense, yet our "commission" stays the same, and sadly in the example of 2020 year actually goes down. That is right, work harder, over-deliver revenue by \$80mm and get basically demoted. We are tirelessly trying to pay our employees better and someday hope to be able to provide benefits. What other industry can you think of that is up 80 million but yet is begging for a raise? Not to mention while we were grinding it out from all different angles the rest of Oregon (including the Govt.) was basically working from home with their slippers on.. It puts more and more pressure on retailers to care less about "liquor" and more about items like beer and wine that we as agents make more money approx. 20-30% vs the 6-8% on liquor.

My goal is to be the largest revenue generator for the OLCC system between both stores in the next couple years. I am passionate about my business, my employees, and my customers. This will not happen if I do not continue to expand and create the premier shopping experiences that we have become known for. Currently we are near the top 5 if both stores are combined and we are proud of that accomplishment, but it has happened by investing heavily into our stores and working tirelessly to be the best. I am fine with being asked to do more but we need an opportunity to be able to pay for all the things we are being tasked with.

Thanks for listening and your support in passing HB2740

Jesse Stafford

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