



KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF BEVERAGE RETAILERS

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Testimony in support of SB 221 to the House Federal and State Affairs Committee
March 16, 2020

Chairman Barker and Members of the Federal and State Affairs Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to support SB 221. Every liquor store in Kansas is owned and operated by a Kansas citizen. This means that retail liquor stores are all locally owned small businesses, with each and every one offering the local economic benefits of main street businesses. Kansas liquor stores are eager to find options to attract and retain customers following the implementation of the 2019 Beer Law, that shifted a significant portion of beer sales to grocery and convenience stores. There are 26 fewer liquor stores licensed today than in 2017 – the year the Beer Law was passed by the Legislature. This is the first time in memory that Kansas has seen such a drop in the number of liquor stores.

What are we talking about? Growlers are refillable containers used for beer. Most often, these are made from dark brown glass and are 64 oz. They resemble a larger bottle or jug. The smaller 32 oz versions are called howlers. Sold only at Kansas microbreweries today, you'll find these at breweries with their logo on them. They have metal screw lids and are simple in appearance and function. In addition to glass, there are growlers made from stainless steel and other materials that keep the beer cold and fresh longer. Crowlers are different but accomplish the same goal. They are 32oz cans that can be filled and sealed onsite. Just like a normal sized can; once opened, it can't be resealed so it should be consumed within a short time of purchase.

We believe that selling these products in liquor stores could benefit our customers, craft brewers, and our small businesses, although it is not expected to change the bottom line drastically..

As with all changes to our current rules, it is important to avoid unintended consequences. Our members had concerns about legislation that might provide late night drinkers with a "to go" option just before closing time at the local watering hole. We do not want to see this become a literal option for "one more for the road". We appreciate that this was addressed by the Senate with limited hours. We also believe that limiting to certain types of licensees is important and we are not supporting expanded sales in big box stores and convenience stores today.

Thank you for your consideration. We would be happy to answer questions.

Amy A. Campbell
Executive Director