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Dear Representative Gibson,

I would like to express my support for a change in the legal definition of beer.

Specifically, I support House Bill 392, an act to amend the definition of malt beverage in North Carolina. State law currently defines malt beverage as "beer, lager, malt liquor, ale, porter, and any other brewed or fermented beverage containing at least one-half of one percent (0.5%), **and not more than six percent (6%)**, alcohol by volume."

I would simply like that 6% limit eliminated from the law. **North Carolina is one of only six states to impose such a restriction**, which prevents importing, brewing, and selling of one-third of the world's finest specialty beers – gourmet beers that are readily available in forty-four other states, but not in North Carolina.

Personally, I make four to six trips to Virginia specifically to buy specialty beer. I usually spend \$150-\$250 per trip. That is \$600-\$1500 a year I am forced to spend out side of the state. Sometimes I will spend an entire weekend out of state with my family expressly to visit restaurants, retailers, and breweries that sell a full range of gourmet beers. I'd rather not make these trips out of state, and I'd really like for North Carolina specialty beer businesses to be able to brew and sell these specialty beer styles. In addition, I travel all over this country for my work and during these travels I am often exchanging samples of beer produced by North Carolina beers for beers from the locales I visit. Often my friends ask for styles I simply cannot provide due to this limitation, this has never been more than a minor disappointment due to the quality of the beer produced in our state; however, it further illustrates the limitations place on our brewers.

This cause is very near and dear to my heart. So close in fact that in 2003 I volunteered and quickly became a leader within Pop The Cap. I have happily donated large amounts of time, effort, and money to changing this law. I have been personally responsible for organizing events in the Piedmont Triad as well as Durham and assisted in events from Asheville to Wilmington. I have personally brought brewers, breweries, distributors, and even documentary film makers together to help support our cause. I have had the pleasure to be interviewed and talk about Pop The Cap and my love of beer by Robin Lindner and WXII, Kim Thore and GoTriad.com, David Ingram and The Winston Salem Journal, and Brad Krantz and Britt Whitmire of Brad & Britt In The Morning on FM Talk 101.1 WZTK.

Through my work and dedication with Pop The Cap, as well as my love for beer I have had the pleasure to meet many North Carolinas brewers, brewery owners, and brewery employees. I long for the day when I can drink a Belgian Triple from Carolina Brewery in Chapel Hill, a Scottish Wee Heavy from Highland Brewing in Asheville, an Imperial Stout from Duck Rabbit Brewery in Farmville, a Double American Pale Ale from Mash House in Fayetteville, a Doppelbock from Weeping Radish in the Outer Banks, or any of the other many styles that our many wonderful North Carolina Brewers can not create. Styles and beers that brewers all over the country, including neighboring Virginia, can and are creating. This limitation is hurting our North Carolina Brewers ability to compete in a very competitive market.

Again, I ask that you support House Bill 392. Please vote to lift the 6% cap on beer in North Carolina and put an end to a Prohibition-era law that limits consumer choice, economic opportunity for the specialty beer industry, and revenue for the state.

For more information – and to see the list of over 120 businesses supporting a change in this old-fashioned law – please visit the Pop The Cap: North Carolinians for Specialty Beer web site (www.popthecap.org).

Thank you very much for your time and for your service to North Carolina.

Sincerely,

Kipp Hollingsworth