

To the members of the Federal and State Affairs Committee -

I am here in support of SB 379 & SB 390. My husband and I own Rowe Ridge Vineyard and Winery in Kansas City KS. Our interest in the planting a vineyard started in 2003 when an article in the Kansas City Star discussed the promotion of grape growing in Kansas by the Kansas Department of Ag. Our first 1000 grape vines were planted in 2005, followed by 500 grapes vines each of the next three years. We have approximately 4.5 acres of grapes. Our first commercial wine was produced in 2007. But the 2007 harvest was minimal because of the late April freeze.

We had hoped to start wine sales in 2009, but with production in 2007 of only 200 gallons of wine, approximately 80 cases, we were not able to start wine sales until 2010. We were told that a variance could be granted to allow us to buy grapes outside the state, but the discussion with the ABC director in 2007 did not result in a variance being granted.

We are in the process of building a wine sales facility this spring. We have spent approximately \$200,000.00 in the last 7 years on the vineyard and the purchase of winery equipment, not including the cost of the land or the new building. We are providing you this information as background to stress the difficult process of developing a financially successful winery business in Kansas.

There have been many emotional discussions on the need for a Kansas fruit requirement. For us, this is a business issue. As a Kansas farm winery, Rowe Ridge currently produces 100% Kansas wine. We would like to continue to produce 100% Kansas wine, but without a large increase of Kansas vineyards, this is not a credible business plan. In the future to have a financially viable winery, we will need to purchase fruit outside of Kansas. Limiting our ability to purchase product to 40% of our Kansas grown product could and will stifle our ability to increase our wine production and business. We have talked to many Kansas vineyards and there are no grapes available for purchase in Kansas

We support the reduction of the 60% Kansas fruit requirement to a 20% Kansas fruit requirement. This change would allow us to grow our winery business. The 60/40 rule is a true barrier to having a profitable Kansas Winery and growing the wine industry in Kansas. Please feel free to contact us with any questions you have. Our email is marcpamrowe@yahoo.com. My cell phone is 913-56-5827.

Pamela & Marc Rowe

Rowe Ridge Vineyard & Winery

Kansas City Kansas

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House Federal & State Affairs

Date: 3-29-12

Attachment # 19