



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
House of Representatives  
State House, Boston 02133-1054

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--PRESS RELEASE--

**Massachusetts House Approves Farm Wineries  
Proposal by Representative Straus**

***For Immediate Release***  
**July 9, 2010**

**Boston – The** Massachusetts House of Representatives has adopted a proposal to promote local farm wineries and assist in the growing popularity of farmers markets in the Commonwealth. Approved July 8<sup>th</sup>, during legislative floor debate on an economic development bill, the farm wineries proposal was offered as a floor amendment by *Representative William M. Straus (D-Mattapoissett)*, Co-Chairman of the Legislature’s Environment and Agriculture Committee. The House approved measure permits Massachusetts wineries to set up and sell locally produced wines along –side other local agricultural producers who are part of the state’s expanding number of farmers’ markets. The Straus amendment was the result of proposals which were developed before Straus’ Legislative Committee on Beacon Hill.

The language would allow farm wineries to sell their product at farmers’ markets in the commonwealth. Farmers' markets would have to apply for a liquor license from the city or town they are operating in and enforce underage drinking laws as any restaurant, bar or package store would.

“Approval of this language is a boost to the 39 farm wineries and over 200 farmers’ markets in the commonwealth. This language preserves local control and state licensure laws by enabling cities and towns to use a system similar to the one-day liquor license currently allowed. The farm wineries constitute the fastest growing agricultural sector in the Commonwealth growing by more than 100% over the past three years” said Representative Straus. “Locally produced wines are the highest value-added commodity produced in Massachusetts”, added Straus.

Expanding economic growth opportunities within Massachusetts agriculture is an important part of the state’s efforts to encourage new jobs and preserve valuable open space at the same time.

Ann Richard, Market Manager of the Fairhaven Farmers Market said with regard to the House action on the Straus measure, “This is wonderful news for all farmers markets. It would allow local vineyards to sell their products along side all the other farmers in the state. Farmers markets would have an even greater selection of local products to offer the public. People who attend Farmers markets can help support the local economy and be sustainable at the same time,” said Ms. Richard of Fairhaven.

Kip Kumler, chairman of the Massachusetts Farm Winery and Growers Association and owner of Turtle Creek Winery in Lincoln, Massachusetts said, "We are enormously grateful for the efforts of Rep. Straus, who has consistently supported agriculture and our rapidly growing industry. The approval of this language is a real step forward for us. It will make a positive difference in this economy and the viability of farmers' markets and farm wineries. Ultimately, this represents more choice and better access to locally grown products for the consumer."

The House version of the economic development bill will now be the subject of a House-Senate Conference Committee where differences can be resolved before a final version of the bill is sent to the Governor for his approval.

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