

Remarks by Kevin Pimental
Xtra Mart
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I am Kevin Pimental, Retail Automation Manager with Xtra Mart Convenience Stores. We are headquartered in North Grosvenordale Connecticut. Xtra Mart operates 33 convenience stores throughout Connecticut.

The convenience store industry is that small neighborhood store where you pick up a coffee or a slushie, a newspaper, a snack for the morning, a gallon of milk or that pint of ice cream on the way home. We are also the largest distribution channel for our Partner, the Connecticut Lottery.

I am here to speak on behalf of all these small businesses and the customers we serve.

We support efforts to modernize Connecticut laws to benefit consumers and to make our industry competitive with neighboring states. Bringing Connecticut's "Grocery Store Beer Permit Law" in line with the vast majority of states in our country will keep Connecticut shoppers shopping in Connecticut and provide them with a level of convenience that customers enjoy in almost all other states.

I would like to share some facts concerning the sale of beer products in Convenience Stores:

- 40 states allow convenience stores to sell beer. There is no distinction in any other state between Convenience Stores that sell gasoline and those Convenience Stores that do not sell gasoline. They are all Convenience Stores.
- The distinction in Connecticut is derived from the interpretation of an 80 year old prohibition era law that has not been changed since the 1930's. The product mix that is set forth in the statute to determine whether or not a store qualifies for the permit is "arcane". The Department of Consumer Protection does its best to make a determination with the badly outdated law.
- Beer sales represent the 3rd largest inside sales category for convenience stores nationally. Why would Connecticut deny consumers the ability to purchase a legal product from their local Convenience Store?

Connecticut consumers should be able to purchase this product in the same manner that they do in almost all other states.

I have attached a simple chart to my remarks which shows that our competitors, grocery stores and package stores sell many of our products but we are not permitted to sell one of theirs, beer. We don't want to take anything away from them; in fact we believe that they should sell all of our products. Competition is good for the consumer and we welcome competition.

We ask that you include in your recommendation to the General Assembly a modernization of the Grocery Store Beer Permit Law, Connecticut Consumers will be the big winners as competition always improves the consumer's position.