



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Finger Lakes legislators urge Governor Cuomo to veto legislation that would impose burdensome and unnecessary new requirements on wineries and craft beverage producers

THOMAS F. O'MARA December 20, 2018

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Albany, N.Y., December 20—A group of Finger Lakes-area state legislators today urged Governor Andrew Cuomo to veto legislation calling for the establishment of uniform standards for tastings of New York manufactured beer, wine, cider, and liquor.

The legislation (**S9040/A11203**) received near-unanimous approval by both houses of the Legislature in the closing days of the 2018 legislative session in late June. Following the Legislature's action, however, numerous wine industry stakeholders sounded the alarm that if enacted, the new law will result in burdensome, unnecessary, unreasonable, and otherwise objectionable new requirements and costs.

The legislation was delivered to Cuomo for final action on Monday, December 17.

Today, state Senators Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Pam Helming (R,C,I-Canandaigua), Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb (R,C-Canandaigua), and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) urged the governor to reject the proposal.

In a joint statement, the legislators said, "It was never the intent of the legislation or its sponsors to create potential hardships for a growing industry which we have supported for years. However, it has become clear to us and to many others within the affected industries that the legislation as currently written will have unintended consequences including increased costs and lost jobs. We hope Governor Cuomo will agree that we cannot risk the positive impact state policies and programs over the past several years have had on our wineries and craft beverage producers. Working together on state-level tax and regulatory relief has helped spark remarkable growth for these industries throughout the Finger Lakes region and statewide. These regulatory and tax reforms, and other actions, have strengthened their economic outlook and position for the future. New York State cannot afford to take any steps to jeopardize this progress. Approving this legislation would be a serious step in the wrong direction."

Specifically, the measure calls for the establishment of uniform standards governing tastings of New York manufactured beer, wine, cider and liquor, as well as authorizing craft beverage producers to implement a new charge for tastings.

If enacted, the area lawmakers and industry leaders said the new law would prohibit anyone under 21 years of age from handling open containers of alcohol, including during the production process, or from serving alcohol at on-premises tastings at wineries, breweries, cideries, and distilleries. Numerous wineries and craft beverage producers employ regional college students, for example, to work tastings and other events. This provision alone would lead to layoffs, limit opportunities for young workers, particularly those studying viticulture or pursuing a career in craft beverage manufacturing, and prove to be a significant and unintended hardship on producers.