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Representative Glenn Wakai, Vice-Chair
Committee on Economic Development & Business Concerns (EDB)

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Support of SB 2169, Relating to Liquor Licenses
EDB Hearing on 3/11/08 at 8:30am, Room 325

Wine The Experience is a locally-owned and -operated small business, where people can create their own personalized, custom-labelled bottles of wine. We are a federally licensed and bonded winery, able to produce wines for on-site and off-site use. We strongly support S.B. No. 2169, Relating to Liquor Licenses, which would establish a new winery class of liquor license.

This type of license is not currently defined by the current license classes of H.R.S. 281-31. The current definitions limit the scope of how a traditional winery would operate, where you could visit for tastings, find your favorites at the market, or pick up a few bottles directly. This bill would thus allow a business or organization that is federally allowed to produce wine, to be able to do so as a fully licensed entity on the state & county level. This entity would then fall under the auspices of and be regulated by the liquor commission.

It would create an additional source of revenue for the state, from both licensing fees and from tax revenue from the wholesale and retail sale of wines that are locally manufactured & bottled in Hawai'i. It would allow a small local business, such as us, to create and market a locally produced product that could then be more broadly and widely available. It could also allow the development of a local artisanal honey wine, mead, sourcing from, supporting and promoting a local agricultural industry.

Also, several years ago, there was a precedence set by the creation of a "Class 14 - Brewpub License". (2004 Legislative Session; SB2606) The language there, save for the specific use of the terms "malt beverages" and "beer", thoroughly and perfectly defines how a winery would be licensed to operate, if those words were substituted with "wine". This bill follows that example, and the simple amendment of terms is basically all that is proposed within this bill.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Shannon Ball