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House Federal & State Affairs Committee
SB379 Opponent

March 28, 2012

Submitted by: Doug Frost
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Dear Chairman and Committee,

As the House Federal & State Affairs Committee is hearing testimony regarding SB379, I wish to send along my written testimony for inclusion. It is my understanding that consideration is being given to the idea of changing the requirements for inclusion of a winery within the Farm Winery designation. Currently, holders of a Farm Winery license must make 60% of their annual production from Kansas grown fruit. The bill seeks to lower that number to 20% and while that would allow Kansas wineries greater flexibility, I believe that the long term interests of the Kansas wine industry would be irreparably harmed.

I believe that there are compelling arguments on either side of this case. Moreover, I am sympathetic to the interests of those who seek to change the minimal requirements from 60% to 20%. But with thirty plus years in the wine industry (all of that time spent in the Kansas City market), as well as national and international experience in these matters, I believe that a reduction of the minimum requirements will allow Kansas based wineries to become reliant upon non-Kansas grapes. While this would enable growth in the short term, my observations of other such situations convinces me that the long term effect would be very harmful to Kansas farmers and ultimately even to Kansas wineries.

The winery business is built upon the integrity of the source materials: grapes from the vineyard. Without an intimate understanding of and proximity to local vineyards, wineries make mistakes, take shortcuts, and by failing to support their local vineyards, undercut their own prospects and foundation. The short-term solution being offered by SB 379 will enfeeble the long-term efforts of those worthy farmers and entrepreneurs who are even now creating a vibrant Kansas wine industry.

I ask the Committee to consider the consequences of these actions and to protect the integrity of the Kansas Farm Winery concept. In so doing, the

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Committee will protect the farmers whose hard work has helped created the basis for the birth and growth of a new industry here, as well as lay the proper groundwork for wineries and winemakers who seek continued growth for their businesses. Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Frost", with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Doug Frost