

To the Liquor Control Committee, we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to testify on the successes seen within the additions of our breweries, distilleries and wineries.

My name is Jessica Capistrant, and I am the President/CEO of the Phoenixville Regional Chamber of Commerce.

I would like to give a bit of background on the Chamber, to provide a better understanding of our place within Phoenixville.

Our organization will celebrate its 90th anniversary next year. In those years, the Chamber has evolved a number of times to serve the community in different ways. In my 7 years with the Chamber, we have focused on offering many networking events, as well as becoming involved in the community events. In 2017, the Chamber organized nearly 100 events for our members and our community. Just last week, the Chamber hosted its Annual Awards Dinner, which honored three (3) of our breweries: Crowded Castle, Conshohocken Brewing and Root Down Brewing Co, for their aesthetic improvements, their interest in civic and community affairs, and their impact on our regional economy.

We feel that collaborating offers us all a chance to get creative. One of our most treasured partnerships is with Phoenixville First – a local cooperative of leaders that focuses on a more comprehensive marketing program for the Borough. Phoenixville First houses the First Friday and Food Truck programs, as well as the summer music series.

The Phoenixville community has changed and grown in a number of ways. We have witnessed an increase in our population, as well as in our number of businesses. The vacancy rate in our downtown is now under 8% in storefronts, as we continue to garner a diverse and cultural surge in owner – occupied businesses. There has also been an increase in the number of businesses that own their building, or are working towards that at this time.

When discussing these new businesses, we must recognize that, part in thanks to this committee, Phoenixville is bearing witness to the influx of craft alcohol establishments. Craft alcohol has proven itself as an industry, and draws folks of

diverse backgrounds together. Craft alcohol has also shown to bring in higher income residents and visitors, and larger disposable incomes.

There have also been several partnerships within the Phoenixville business community, including stout or bourbon infused hand made marshmallows with Bridge Street Chocolates, finding local bottles or brews on top at restaurants and bars, and the Flight of the Phoenix – a crawl through our craft scene.

Creating craft alcohol to the extent that our breweries, distilleries and wineries are, requires major investments in equipment, space and staffing. Those in Phoenixville have taken many creative approaches to ensure their patrons have a great experience.

As we know, Phoenixville's Foundry produced steel that supports structures around the world. Now, we can take pride in the job creation found in craft alcohol, as well as pride in something "made in Phoenixville".

The Chamber embraces this idea, and has already spoken with a few of these businesses on creating tours, and an informational website. This type of development re-energizes downtowns like ours, and can certainly benefit the businesses around it as we incorporate the tourism side of the industry.

We appreciate the efforts of this committee to improve the legislative environment for those in the production and sale of craft alcohol, and will gladly work along side all efforts to continue the growth and positive response added to our community.

Thank you.