



THE **Odom** CORPORATION

Dear Members of the House and Commerce Committee:

I am writing to express our strong support for HB189 on behalf of the Alaska Beer Wine and Spirits Wholesaler Association. Our industry is facing significant challenges in recruiting willing employees for crucial entry-level positions such as merchandising, driving, and warehouse operations. The shortage of personnel is severely impacting our ability to provide efficient service and deliver products to our valued accounts.

Expanding the eligibility age for employment from 21 to 18 would be a significant boon to our organizations, particularly during the bustling summer months. This change would broaden the pool of available workers and alleviate some of the strain caused by the current shortage.

It is important to note that none of our members permit their employees to consume alcoholic beverages during working hours. Therefore, we do not foresee any risk of underage drinking as a result of this proposed legislation. Instead, enabling younger individuals to join our workforce would afford them valuable opportunities to embark on careers within a dynamic industry that sustains numerous high-paying jobs within our community.

Implementing this proposed law would not only benefit our organizations but also provide relief to many of our customers who have been forced to operate with reduced hours due to staffing shortages. We believe that empowering younger individuals to enter the workforce will contribute to the overall resilience and vitality of our industry.

Thank you for considering our perspective and for your support of HB189. Together, we can work towards a stronger and more vibrant beverage industry in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Scott Stewart

Vice President Odom Corporation

President Alaska Wholesalers Association