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Gary Koski- Pres.
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Dear Senator Kelly,

I am writing to you in regards to S.B. 391, an Act relating to the sale of wine by wineries. I am starting up Alaska Winery, Alaska's first licensed winery to produce, ferment, and bottle a line of fine berry and fruit wines from locally grown produce. In order to accomplish this, we are actively engaged in the creation of a commercial berry industry which would increase the berry crop from a present level of 5-6000 pounds per year, up to 40-50,000 pounds per year and could create well over 200 jobs. I am not asking for state assistance, although the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors has agreed to support and back us in securing financial support.

We are hoping to start operation of our winery this summer and to be able to use part of this years crop of fruit to advantage. We will be starting off as a micro-scale winery (15,000 bottles/yr), expanding production as we gain market acceptance and the expansion of the berry crop allow. Expansion of the berry industry will also allow the expansion of or the creation of various other berry users such as Alaska Wild Berry Products and others.

S.B. 391 would allow us to sell our wine, and only our wine, from our winery to the general public, the bulk of which will be tourists. Passage of this bill would follow in the steps of the other 49 states that allow the manufacturer of a legally produced wine the ability to sell his wine, but only his wine, from his winery to the general public. The restriction of being only allowed to sell less than two cases (5 wine gallons) is a sensible restriction and will allow for more control. Paragraph C of Sec. 04.11.140 already prohibits us from selling our wine by the glass. But we should be able to sell a bottle or two of Blueberry or Salmonberry Wine to John Q. Tourist if he wants to take a bottle back to his Uncle Jake or his sister Betty.

I have talked to Bill Roche and Pat Sharrock of the Alcohol Beverage Control Board about this bill and they could see no problem with it and said that they support both it and us, in our development. With out the rights to sell our product to the general public, in any quantity, makes us dependant on a third party to sell our wine for us and we will not be able to operate or exist.

I urge you for your support in passage of S.B. 391. If you have any questions about Alaska Winery, please get in touch with me and I will provide you answers.

Sincerely,



Gary Koski- Pres.