

August 23, 2013

Cooperation's the Word for Beer Here

Michigan Microbrewers cooperate with state beer distributors; both support new legislation.

Harry Graver's "[Regulation Has Michigan's Microbrewers Frothing](#)" (Cross Country, Aug. 10) about craft brewing in Michigan contained a glaring one-sidedness that deserves to be addressed. The article strongly implies, through juxtaposition and omission, that Michigan distributors oppose three pieces of legislation that would help craft brewers.

Not only do distributors support the three pieces of legislation cited in the article, we actively partnered with craft brewers to develop forward-looking reforms both sides could support. This was clearly conveyed to the author of the piece. Your article puts at risk the good faith brewers and distributors have worked very hard to build over years.

Mike Lashbrook

*President
Michigan Beer & Wine Wholesalers Association
Lansing, Mich.*

Mr. Graver paints a deeply adversarial picture that is as outdated as it is untrue. Michigan is abundant with stories of distributors working with small brewers who want to take their products out of a garage or a basement and into the marketplace.

The story of our brewery, Founders Brewing Co., and our local distributor, Alliance Beverage Distributing, is one such story. Founders began as a home-brewed product, started in 1997 by two guys straight out of college in Grand Rapids. The Gary brothers at Alliance helped get Founders out into the marketplace. Today, Founders is the 30th largest brewery in the nation, with internationally acclaimed beers, and the fastest growing Top 50 brewery in the U.S. in 2012. Founders' strong relationship with our distributor helped us learn the business side of distribution, and to this day Founders and its distributors work hand-in-hand building our brands.

Your article completely overlooks the long partnership between brewer and distributor that has helped Michigan become the fifth-largest craft beer state today, with craft brewers and distributors employing more than 6,000 people.

Dave Engbers

Founders Brewing Co.,

Kim Gary

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<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887324139404579015172419001960.html>