



# Representative Chris Tuck

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House Majority Leader

Serving House District 23 • Dimond Estates, Foxridge, Taku, Campbell, Northwood, and Windemere

## House Bill 269 Distillery Licenses Sponsor Statement

Small businesses play an important role in our society and are truly the backbone to the economy. Equally important is the fact that new businesses are also one of the most important forces of innovation and employment.

Over the past few years, entrepreneurs across Alaska have entered into the craft distillery world. With the help of legislation passed by the 28<sup>th</sup> Alaska Legislature we now have seven new distilleries, making a total of ten across the state.

In 2014, the Alaska Legislature passed House Bill 309 with overwhelming support. This bill allowed craft distilleries to open tasting rooms, putting them on par with breweries and wineries, to provide samples and selling their product, with specific limitations. This change allowed distilleries to increase their visibility, attract more customers, compete effectively with multi-national brands, and become a more active participant in their respective communities.

The Alcoholic Beverage Control Board has proposed regulations to disallow the mixing of distilled products with non-alcoholic beverage not produced by the distillery. These regulations are contrary to the original intent of the Legislature. Most people do not consume, nor should we promote, the consumption of straight distilled crafts.

House Bill 269 will clarify the Legislature's original intent to allow our craft distillers to serve their product with mixers, garnishes and other ingredients that are non-alcoholic beverages. The proposed regulations by the ABC Board have the potential to impede the growth of the craft distillery industry in Alaska and hurt our hard-working small business owners.

It is crucial that we continue to support all our small businesses and not create regulations that will hamper their ability to thrive. I appreciate your support for the quick passage of House Bill 269.

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