

LB 259
General Affairs Committee
Testimony of Chris Wagner
Project Extra Mile
January 30, 2023

Good afternoon, Vice Chair Hughes and members of the committee. My name is Chris Wagner, and I am here representing Project Extra Mile, a network of community partnerships working in Nebraska to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms.

We are opposed to LB 259 because it increases the availability of alcohol in communities across the state. The World Health Organization recommends three “best buys” for state and local governments to prevent and reduce excessive alcohol consumption and its harms: reducing advertising, affordability, and availability. Best buys are essentially cost-effective strategies that are proven to keep communities healthy and safe and reduce costs to taxpayers from underage drinking, binge drinking, heavy drinking, and drinking by pregnant women.

While I understand part of the reason for this change is to increase accountability by shifting farm wineries away from special designated licenses (SDLs) and towards an annual license, but the truth of the matter is that our state does not allocate enough resources to adequately enforce our liquor laws. At the same time, we can't ignore that this bill goes against the established literature on how to reduce alcohol-related harms.

For these reasons we urge the committee to indefinitely postpone LB 259.