

**STATEMENT OF SUSAN WRONOWSKI
OWNER/PRESIDENT
CROSS SOUND DELI SERVICES, INC.
IN SUPPORT OF RAISED H.B. No. 5311**

Good morning Sen. Maroney, Rep. D'Agostino, ranking members and members of the General Law Committee. My name is Susan Wronowski and I am the owner and president of Cross Sound Deli Services, Inc., and I am submitting this testimony in support of Raised House Bill No. 5311 AN ACT CONCERNING VESSELS, VEHICLES AND IN-STATE TRANSPORTER'S PERMITS FOR ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR.

Cross Sound Deli Services is an affiliate of Cross Sound Ferry Services, Inc. and provides the concessions and bars aboard the ferry service's fleet of vessels operating out of our terminal in New London, CT. Cross Sound Deli and Cross Sound Ferry are owned by the Wronowski family, whose members have lived in Connecticut their entire lives. Our family's maritime businesses now span four generations and over half a century here in Connecticut.

Cross Sound Ferry provides year-round vehicle, passenger and high-speed passenger service between New London and Orient Point, Long Island, NY. We also operate seasonal high-speed passenger only ferry service to Block Island from New London in addition to lighthouse sight-seeing excursions during the spring, summer and fall. Owned and operated by my family since 1975, Cross Sound Ferry is one of only three privately-owned high-capacity vessel owners and operators in the entire U.S. as recognized by the U.S. Coast Guard. We employ almost 500 people during our peak operating season and over 225 year-round.

Cross Sound Deli employs approximately 60 year-round people and as many as 120 during the peak season. These figures are in addition to the number of people the ferry service employs. The food and beverage service aboard the ferries provided by Cross Sound Deli is a much-needed and welcomed amenity to our customers, many of whom drive long distances from neighboring states to use our service. Our customers have come to depend on the quality food and beverages Cross Sound Deli provides onboard. While Cross Sound Deli offers an essential amenity to the overall service and pays Connecticut sales taxes, it is not relied on to be a significant profit center in contrast to the ferry service. In addition, during this current pandemic, both businesses continue to experience sharp declines in revenue with Cross Sound Ferry and Cross Sound Deli realizing decreases in revenue of 48% and 64% respectively in 2020 making it the most difficult year ever from a business standpoint.

None of our vessels operate all year long, as they each come in and out of service for their annual maintenance cycles during the off season and operate as travel demand fluctuates. A few of the vessels are only used three to four months of the year to meet seasonal demand, thus are out of service more than they are in service. In reality, unlike a bar or restaurant that would be open year-round, we operate in a completely different manner and revenues are realized under drastically different conditions.

Based on these conditions described above, the increase in permitting fees under the new legislation saw permitting costs increase by 300%, an onerous amount under normal conditions. We agree with the committee that the concept of a unified permit for the entire fleet as outlined in Raised H.B 5311 is an excellent idea and one we support. Thank you for your consideration.