AT THE BAR WITH BOWDITCH

A Legal Blog for the Craft Brewing Community

Congress Is Interested In Helping Breweries Export

BY AIVI NGUYEN • JULY 6, 2016

Have you ever thought about whether American beers are on tap or distributed to other countries, and if they are, which ones? With the staggering number of breweries in the United States, and with the popularity of craft beers expanding worldwide, it makes sense that at some point in a brewery's business plan the idea of exporting their beer abroad will become a consideration.

In early June, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade held a hearing to discuss how Congress can help expand agricultural trade by making it easier for American exporters. The chairman of the subcommittee remarked that "Agricultural exports are not limited to what is grown, raised and harvested in America. Just as important are the products made from what farms produce."

One focus on the hearing was on beer and the benefits of the Brewers Association's Export Development Program. The subcommittee heard testimony from Heather McClung, co-founder of Schooner EXACT Brewing, out of Seattle, and the president of the Washington Brewers Guild. McClung testified that as part of the program, Schooner EXACT was able to participate in the American Craft Beer Experience in Japan. Since that festival, Schooner EXACT's sales have increased 29% with a significant portion of sales in Japan.

The subcommittee members were interested to know how expanding beer trade would help create jobs domestically. McClung testified that expanded beer trade helps "allied industries," like producers of equipment, stainless steel producers, and producers of packaging equipment. In fact, data from the Brewers Association indicates that for every job created in the craft brewing industry there is an opportunity for an additional 12.5 jobs in the "allied industries."

Hopefully, the interest shown by the subcommittee translates into legislation that makes it easier for brewers to share their beer with the world.

You can watch the full subcommittee hearing HERE.