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## **MABA Hails Plan to Boost Distillers, Spark New Era in Agri-Tourism**

*House OKs proposal to let artisanal distillers sell on-site; MABA urges Senate to pass legislation*

EAST LANSING – The **Michigan Agri-Business Association** today praised the House for passing a plan that would allow small, artisanal distilleries to market and sell their products on-site – a move that will generate millions of dollars in economic activity and create jobs and new investment opportunities, especially in the agriculture sector.

“Artisanal distilleries are a growing and exciting new industry that can attract investments and jobs to our state. Michigan has the ingredients to excel in this craft and this legislation will help put our state on the map,” MABA President **Jim Byrum** said. “This plan brings together everyone, from agriculture to tourism to manufacturing, to make great new products right here in Michigan. We applaud the House for passing it and urge the Senate to also pass it and send it to the Governor for her signature.”

The plan, sponsored by Rep. **Barb Byrum** (D-Onondaga), will create a new class of license allowing distilleries that manufacture less than 60,000 gallons a year to sell their products on-site and give away samples. The cost of the license will be \$100 annually.

There are currently over 70 small brewers in Michigan, and microbreweries are a \$25-million industry in the state. The Michigan Economic Development Corporation estimates that this bill will spur \$414.7 million in economic activity, encourage more than 20 artisanal distilleries to set up shop in a year and create 1,400 new jobs. These artisanal distilleries are entrepreneurial operations making small batches of spirits, using Michigan grain and fruits.

“We’ve watched the microbrewery and wine industries grow by leaps and bounds in Michigan, and this plan will have the same positive impact by encouraging artisanal distilleries to thrive in Michigan,” **Jim Byrum** said. “This will spark wide interest and create tremendous new opportunities, especially for agriculture, in a unique and exciting industry.”

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