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**ENVILLE ALES**

Brewers of Fine Cask Ales

29 MAY 2013

Rt. Hon. Dr Vince Cable,  
Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills,  
Dept for Business, Innovation and Skills,  
1 Victoria Street,  
London  
SW1H 0ET

20<sup>th</sup> May 2013

Received in  
Central Drafting Unit  
30 MAY 2013

Dear Dr Cable,

**Reference: Government Consultation Pub Companies and Tenants April 2013**

I am writing to express my concern with regard to the above consultation. I am a director and co-owner of a small craft brewery in South Staffordshire. Enville Ales Limited was formed 20 years ago in 1993 and now produces just over 1,000,000 pints of award winning ale a year. Unlike many of our competitors we do not own any pubs and have no 'captive' market in which to sell our products to increase volume and improve commercial viability.

Whilst market conditions have been extremely difficult and many pub outlets have closed as a result the smoking ban, supermarket loss leading, social and demographic changes, the beer duty escalator (for who's scrapping we are so very grateful) and not forgetting last year's appalling weather we have survived and are slowly beginning to grow our small business.

Our success has been achieved through passionate ownership, many long unpaid management hours, the production of high quality ales using finest British ingredients, listening to our customers, embracing change and technology and working with new partners. I believe our practical knowledge of the British Pub Industry as a supplier over the past 20 years qualifies us to comment on the above consultation and particularly with regard to the last item to which I referred above; working with new partners.

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Whilst Enville Ales mainly deliver into the 'free' on-trade business nearly five years ago we negotiated a mutually beneficial supply agreement with Punch Taverns. In addition we also joined the SIBA Direct Delivery Scheme (DDS) to enable us to supply Enterprise Inns and other smaller Pub Cos. From nothing this supply channel is now % of our business and has allowed us to grow, brew greater volume more efficiently and apart from duty rises, absorb raw material rises to the benefit of all our customers and their drinkers.

During this time we have noticed a seachange in the way Punch Taverns conduct their business not only with ourselves as a supplier but in the way they are working hard to build long term, mutually rewarding partnerships with their tenants. Those licensees partnering with Punch and who embrace the help and support that Punch provide are steadily growing their businesses month on month.

Punch have a national network of business relationship managers who help and work closely with their tenants to drive business, support refurbishment programs, discuss and advise with regard to changing cultures in the pub industry and liaise with small brewers such as ourselves to get involved and support community pubs. Indeed we now provide free cask ale cellar training to Punch licensees, lend equipment for small festivals, offer brewery tours and arrange in the pub 'meet the brewer' evenings etc.

From new signage to arranging weekend beer festivals, sponsoring celebrity visits, loaning a marquee, supporting applications for licensing of special events Punch's management team work hard to look after their partners.

We value our partnership with Punch Taverns. We have enjoyed 5 years of honourable trading with them and despite being a small supplier we have at all times been treated fairly, openly and positively. Unlike many of our 'free of tie' freehold customers Punch Taverns also pay us on time every single month. (This is crucial to a small business like Enville Ales)

We regularly attend Punch Roadshows in our region where we can meet up to 300 of their publicans in a single day. I am sure those involved in the government's consultation process will be familiar with the efforts Punch are making to engage their tenants but in case they are not I can honestly say that in the last two years, every tenant to whom we have spoken at a Roadshow has told us that Punch is a changed organisation that listens to and cares about its partners. We have also met senior executives from Punch who attend to listen and understand the feedback from their estate.

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My colleagues and I want to continue growing a sustainable brewery business. We believe working closely with Pub Cos like Punch Taverns is key to our future success just as we believe we have high quality ales that are key to the success of their outlets and thus enable us to contribute to the partnership. This is not the time to inflict legislation and regulation on key players in the industry like Punch Taverns who are working so hard to keep pubs open. The days of 'greedy' breweries, pillaging their estates, has long gone and Punch are implementing radical changes and offering a wide variety of flexible leases.

The implementation of misguided or ill-informed legislation now could seriously upset this change and result in further damage to the industry with a plethora of 'knock-on', unforeseen consequences. The impact on a small business like ours could be disastrous and is deeply concerning.

We are just one of hundreds of small suppliers to Punch Taverns and the other Pub Cos however you would be most welcome to visit our small but passionate business in South Staffordshire for further discussion and insight. The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson MP is familiar with our business and local reputation and would I'm sure be willing to accompany you on such a visit within his constituency.

Yours sincerely,

Jerry Hedges  
Director  
Enville Ales limited

CC: Gavin Williamson MP, Giles Wilkes, Jo Swinson MP, James Wild,  
Rt. Hon. Michael Fallon MP, Jane Hartshorne, Rupert Harrison, Tim Luke,  
Rt. Hon. Kenneth Clarke QC MP, Brandon Lewis MP, Kathryn Laing.