

Rt Hon Dr Vince Cable MP

Secretary of State

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

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Dear Mr Cable

I can't speak for other people in the trade who have a lease but for me the toughest challenges have come directly from the government; introducing the smoking ban which we were not even given the option to be a smoking or non smoking establishment the beer duty escalator/business rates/cheap accessible alcohol from supermarkets and vat. If the government were really interested in the lowly publican they could reduce vat for food scrap the beer duty escalator or at least make it clear to the general public that when they reduce beer by 1p per pint that the landlord still has to pay more due to the beer escalator. While increasing wines, spirits and soft drinks could we not pay less vat on kegs of beer and lager as these are not available in supermarkets and not policed at the same levels. At least when we sell alcohol in a pub it is in a controlled environment with strict guidelines i.e. underage drinking/alcohol abuse etc.

Pub companies "exploitive?" Not in my opinion. They have given me an opportunity I would not have had even though I have made them a lot of money as well, at the moment recession and government makes it tough to succeed. We employ 6 people and should we have to close this would put more people on the job seekers allowance.

I am concerned that if pub companies were forced to abolish the tie, pubs such as mine would be more valuable as retail or residential property. Either my rent would go up to an unaffordable level or the pub company (Punch Taverns) would dispose

of my pub as the return generated by rent alone would not be enough. I for one would not be in a position to purchase the freehold.

Obviously I would rather be free of tie on all products but I current receive a significant discount off the wholesale list and I have had lots of support from the pub company. If the pub company's success was not directly linked to my sale of beer, I am not sure that they would supply me with the many business building items that they have (e.g. bar works, business ideas, quarterly marketing magazine, training courses, trade shows, Design and Print work etc). All of these items have been provided free-of-charge by my Partnership Development Manager to help me protect and develop my business.

I have just been subject to a rent review and I was offered a reduction on my current rent. Punch have supported me through difficult times as their success is linked to mine.

Pub companies come in for a lot of criticism and no doubt some of it is merited. However my experience with Punch Taverns has been nothing but positive and I believe that it is the existence of the beer tie that creates this relationship and mutual success. I have a very good BRM who is helpful in every way possible but it is still hard to make a reasonable living.

Yours sincerely