RE: Stoli Group (USA), LLC
Case No. 24-80146-swe-11

Your Honor,

As a majority shareholder of the STOLI Group, I would like to thank the Court and all parties involved in these proceedings for their time and efforts in seeking a fair resolution. I wish to extend my gratitude to everyone — including Bardstown company, the Committee, the unsecured creditors, and the professionals — for their engagement and for supporting the Plan. It has not been an easy process, and the positions of the Debtors and the Bank remain unaligned.

I write not only as a shareholder but as a custodian of memory and continuity of an enterprise that has resisted erosion by history, by politics, and by economic turmoil. Because facts matter. Because truth, however inconvenient, must be spoken and remembered. And because even in an age of instability and doubt, justice can still be named.

The Debtors now stand at the edge of resolution. Acceptance of the Plan will mark the end of uncertainty. It will mark the reaffirmation of responsibility. And it will mark the beginning of recovery — not only financial, but moral.

The STOLI Group has survived much, not by accident, but by resilience, by vision, and by a refusal to collapse under the weight of injustice. For more than two decades, this company has existed within a framework of challenge and siege from the belligerence of a state that views private enterprise as a threat to its control.

One of President Putin's earliest decrees was a gesture disguised as governance — a call to "restore" state ownership of trademarks that were held rightfully and lawfully by STOLI across more than one hundred sovereign nations. That was not law, it was reprisal. Because the majority shareholder did not align with the regime, the regime sought alignment through aggression.

This is not a pretext but a context. Because history matters. They tried to poison me, to extradite me. But law held firm where politics faltered: the UK said no, Switzerland said no. Justice stood its ground.

Fast forward to 2022, when the world once again shuddered under the weight of tanks and missiles, STOLI did not stay silent. It did not hide. It did not hedge. It sent humanitarian aid. It offered refuge. And for that, the Russian state stripped the Group of its final asset on its soil — a $100 million distillery, seized under a veil of legal pretence.

The very same week — coincidence or choreography? — the company's servers were crippled in a cyberattack. Operational systems fell. Invoicing failed. Compliance faltered. And with it came breaches — not of intent, but of capacity.

Yet production did not stop; the product kept flowing to the United States and all other markets. We persevered and were supported by our partners worldwide.

It is deeply unfortunate that it was not possible for the Debtors to secure understanding with the Lender, which tightened its grip on liquidity not in caution, but in disregard, ignoring what are globally recognized as force majeure circumstances.

Had all parties acted in partnership rather than in pressure, these proceedings could have been avoided. But with restricted access to funds, delayed payments, and halted production, the inevitable followed.

Let me make it clear: the Debtors should not be in front of this Court - they acted in good faith. They opened negotiations, offered compromises, and were very close to securing new deals worth up to $50 million – funds that would have enabled repayment of over half of the loans, which would have definitely allowed all the parties to avoid the Chapter 11 scenario entirely. There would have been no financial harm to the Debtors that may be assessed in the hundreds of millions, including at least $ 10 million of avoidable spend on these proceedings, no losses from delayed production from 250,000 unbottled and undelivered cases, and no lasting damage to the STOLI brand value through retail delistings and the silenced marketing campaigns never run.

This moment is about direction. The Debtors do not ask for indulgence; they ask for recognition. There is a Plan. It is sound. It is fair. It has not only the overwhelming support of all constituents, there is no significant, yet alone material, creditor – other than the Bank – that has not voted in favor of the Plan. The future is not yet written, but the Debtors are prepared to write it.

In my humble opinion, those who have built on a foundation of integrity deserve the chance to rise again, especially when all they ask is time and space to restore what has been broken by forces beyond their control. I hope they will have this chance.

Respectfully,

Yuri Schefler

09/22/2025