**Statement from Kevin O’Connor**

**Founder, Owner and CEO of O’Connor Brewing**

**June 18, 2021**

Over the past few days, there have been multiple social media posts of allegations of sexism, racism, and sexual harassment at O’Connor Brewing. Given that our company is in its eleventh year and has built a strong reputation among our customers and in the community for quality products and atmosphere at our location in Norfolk, these were very painful to read. I want to assure everyone, including our patrons, families and employees, both current and former, that we take all complaints seriously and will redouble our commitment to insure we have a work environment in which everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

I have not spoken directly to anyone who posted on Facebook, Reddit or other sites because all of their statements were made anonymously or through a third party. I will say unequivocally that sexism, racism, and sexual harassment have no place at our Brewery and never have.

After the posts were brought to my attention, I held a company-wide meeting and invited employees to share their thoughts with me. Obviously, they were embarrassed by the negative attention O’Connor Brewing was receiving but vowed to work with me to address any problems. No one has resigned as a result of this controversy. At my suggestion, they wrote a response, which as the Facebook administrator, I posted on our site. Perhaps I should have drafted it over my name, for which I apologize, but I am doing so now.

In response to the social media posts and the company meeting, I have created an action plan with immediate and ongoing initiatives to make sure employees feel respected, heard, and supported. They include:

* Opening an investigation into the complaints posted on social media, which will be conducted by an independent third-party investigator with extensive experience in the investigation of employment-related complaints and the enforcement of discrimination and harassment laws.
* Immediate and on-going training on discrimination and harassment.
* Immediate and on-going training on diversity and inclusion.
* Implementation of a “Speak Up” program to encourage dialogue, meaning employees can bring concerns to any member of our management team, or if they choose, can discuss them with a committee of non-management employees. Employees will also have access to a confidential hotline to make complaints.
* Actively soliciting feedback from employees via a culture survey which will be sent to all employees immediately and then quarterly afterwards; employees will have the option to submit survey results confidentially.

It is my personal pledge, as the founder and owner of O’Connor Brewing, that our business will always be collaborative and inclusive, and I am taking steps to ensure that the workplace reflects that mission.