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BELVEDERE
ASSOCIATION

Reference: HB0954 | MVBA OPPOSED

February 7, 2020

The Honorable Delegates Talmadge Branch, Stephanie Smith, and Tony Bridges
Maryland House of Delegates
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Sent via e-mail: talmadge.branch@house.state.md.us
stephanie.smith@house.state.md.us
tony.bridges@house.state.md.us

Reference: **Opposition to House Bill 954 (Cross-Filed with Senate Bill 328) | Baltimore City | 45th District Alcoholic Beverages | Exchange of Class B Beer, Wine and Liquor License for Aloha Sushi & Aloha Liquors 1218-1220 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21201**

Dear Delegate Branch, Delegate Smith, and Delegate Bridges:

At our recent January meeting, the voting members of the board of the Mount Vernon-Belvedere Improvement Association (MVBA) voted unanimously to oppose the exchange of a Class B Beer, Wine and Liquor License for a Class BD7 Beer, Wine and Liquor License on behalf of any Class B license holder in the Mount Vernon-Belvedere community and specifically for the referenced applicant, Aloha Tokyo, Inc. T/A Aloha Sushi & Aloha Liquors located at 1218 and 1220 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21201.

As I had previously discussed via telephone with Senator McCray, Aloha Sushi & Aloha Liquors has a *10-year track record of using a Class B restaurant license* for their package store at 1220 N. Charles Street, despite numerous complaints to the Liquor Board by the MVBA and a protest hearing requested by concerned neighbors. The approval of this bill for exchanging a Class B license to a Class BD7 license would further negatively impact other liquor license holders in the community who have complied with their license requirements because *Aloha would continue to operate a package store*—their purpose for requesting the BD7—without an appropriate license.

We believe that there should be an equal opportunity for license holders to be successful in their businesses and that one license holder should not have an unfair advantage over another. Class A license holders cannot sell on Sunday, yet Aloha Liquors has been operating a package store at 1220 N. Charles Street and selling for off-premises consumption 7-days a week for the past decade and would continue to sell on Sundays if granted a BD7 license. Additionally, the approval of this bill would set a negative precedent and potentially lead to a proliferation of other Class B license holders requesting their licenses be exchanged for BD7 licenses.

At present, there is no demonstrated public need for this requested BD7 license within the Mount Vernon community.



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Also, Douglas Paige, Executive Director of the Board of Liquor License Commissioners for the City of Baltimore, as well as Matthew Achhammer, Community Liaison for the Liquor Board, were previously informed of MVBA's opposition to legislation for changing the referenced Class B license to a Class BD7 for reasons outlined above. In fact, earlier last year, MVBA was informed by the Liquor Board that the establishment, Aloha Sushi & Aloha Liquors, had been requested to significantly alter their space at 1220 N. Charles Street to be in compliance with a B-class restaurant license. Subsequently, in late 2019, MVBA was informed that the owner(s) of the establishment were moving forward with their legislative request.

For the record, MVBA does not have an executed MOU with Aloha Sushi and/or Aloha Liquors for an exchange of their current Class B license for a Class BD7 license, as we are in opposition to this legislation.

I respectfully and formally request you please forward this letter of opposition for House Bill 954 to Chairman Dereck Davis and Members of the Economic Matters Committee.

I'm electronically attaching a letter of opposition to Senate Bill 328 introduced by Senator McCray that is cross-filed with your House Bill 954. Initially, the system did not show this House Bill 954 filed, but currently shows it with a February 5, 2020 filing date. Therefore, I'm sending this letter now in opposition of your bill.

Thank you in advance for your review of our information, and we urge all of you, Senator McCray, the Economic Matters Committee as well as the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee to oppose House Bill 954 and Senate Bill 328. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (410) 227-4853 or via email at president@mvba.org.

Sincerely,

Michele Richter, President
Mount Vernon-Belvedere Improvement Association

cc: Chairman Dereck Davis and Members of Economic Matters
Chairman Paul Pinsky and Members of Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
Senator Cory McCray, Senator of Maryland 45th District
Antonio Hayes, Senator of Maryland 40th District
Eric Costello, Councilman of Baltimore City 11th District
Robert Stokes, Councilman of Baltimore City 12th District
Douglas Paige, Executive Secretary of Baltimore Liquor Board
Matthew Achhammer, Community Liaison of Baltimore Liquor Board
Chanel Branch, Delegate of Maryland District 45
MVBA File