

Oppose HB506
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I am writing in opposition to HB506. My business, Fishpaws Marketplace is a third-generation alcohol retailer in Anne Arundel County which dates to 1935. My family purchased the business in 1983 and now my children are learning the business. We employ between 20 and 25 people depending on the season. We offer employee benefits of health insurance, paid time off and 401K. We donate at a minimum \$10,000 yearly to local charities. Not only do we employ residents but are supported by distributors, breweries, distilleries which encompasses about 50 – 60 people weekly which includes salespeople, drivers, and support personnel. We carry over 260 local beers, wines and spirits to support locally made products.

I know the opposition is touting convenience as the reason for this legislation. Maryland is positioned to best serve the customer. We have licensees in every shopping center which houses a grocery store, so the goods are available in the same shopping trip for the consumer. The supermarkets and chains are not going to employ an additional 20 to 25 people with the addition of alcohol, Currently many licensees are offering home delivery which adds to convenience for the consumer.

I have invested heavily in our business through the years as most small businesses do. Our initial purchase was a million dollars. In 2004, we undertook a 1.2-million-dollar renovation because our physical plant dated back to 1935. In 2010, I bought out my partners for ½ million dollars. In 2020, we increased our parking lot for \$210,000.00. In 2021 we did \$50,000. In renovations and in 2022 we have \$50,000.00 worth of renovation. In total we have invested a minimum of 2.5 to 3 million dollars in establishing and improving our business. We employed local contractors, plumbers and electricians and tradesmen in very project we completed, Most small business owners invest heavily in their businesses. This legislation will have many businesses suffering a loss of business and a loss in their investment.

The alcohol business is very complicated with many rules and regulations. Unfortunately, the public does not understand the intricacies of the industry. The legislature more fully understands the complexity of the laws and are better able to way the pros and cons of this legislation. The public health and small business impacts need to be considered. Unfortunately, the public does not understand this balancing act.

The bill automatically allows these outlets 1300 to 1500 additional outlets with no regard to saturation of a market area or the legal control of alcohol, a controlled substance. This bill would allow the addition of licenses for 7-11 (179 units), Royal Farms (116 units), Walgreens (83 units), CVS (89 units), Dollar General (over 100 units) and grocery stores. Do we really want alcohol outlets on every corner? We are also seeing automation of cashiers at many of these stores, so will there be that strict enforcement of the alcohol rules in terms of carding minors and monitoring for intoxicated consumers.

I ask you to oppose this bill. Let's support local small business in all ways by keeping jobs, taxes, local product sales in Maryland. Let us keep Maryland safe, with quality jobs.