

FRIENDLY FARM RESTAURANT

TESTIMONY ON Senate BILL 606

(BALTIMORE COUNTY – ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES LICENSES – TRANSFERS)

SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Good afternoon and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak on behalf of Senate Bill 606. My name is Larry Wilhelm, our family business, Friendly Farm Restaurant was started by my parents in 1959 and our family has now been operating for over 63 years. My niece and nephew are taking the reins of our business and looking forward to the future. They as well as my brother and I see the opportunity to grow our restaurant business as we plan to undertake expansion in the coming years. Over these many years we have been in business, we have received many inquiries from customers asking if we serve alcohol. Sometimes they will come in and just assume that we do and are disappointed when it is not available. We have also lost numerous banquets and events because we are unable to serve alcoholic beverages. The reason is, at this time, we are unable to have a liquor license based on the population formula that applies in Baltimore County. Being in the hospitality business we need to do what we can to provide what our customers want to stay competitive in our industry.

Senate Bill 606 would give us the opportunity we need to obtain a liquor license through a transfer from another district that is oversaturated with licenses based on its population and not likely to be used in the future.

Further, as Baltimore County desires to promote tourism, we feel that we are 100% in line with that goal. We are a rural destination farm restaurant. People drive from all directions including the surrounding states to come to our one-of-a-kind country setting and enjoy a great meal. We are ready and would like to build on that and provide even more memorable experiences while helping Baltimore County increase tourism. We believe that a liquor license will help considerably, to attract new customers to our business including local and non-local residents.

Notwithstanding the recent events that has been very difficult for our industry to navigate, my family and I are very excited for the future of Friendly Farm. We hope to keep building our business so that perhaps the fourth generation has the opportunity to carry on the “family business”.

Thank you for your time and consideration.