



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Written Testimony – HB 246 – Alcoholic Beverages – Class 4 Limited Winery License –
Food Service**

February 20, 2023

Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee. For the record, I am Delegate Andrea Fletcher Harrison here today in support of HB 246.

The goal of this legislation is to enable wineries, with the proper local licensing and permitting, to be able to serve more varieties of food – alongside their Maryland-made wine.

I introduced this legislation after I visited my local winery, and I realized the limited amount of food options that wineries are currently able to serve.

This legislation enables wineries to go through the local process to obtain the proper local licensing and serve additional food options that other food establishments can serve. In addition, this change allows wineries to serve food the same way the farm breweries are already allowed to do with their class 8 farm brewery license.

Expanding food options for wineries is important as:

1. Again, this level of food service is already permitted at Maryland farm breweries – which are similar to wineries. This legislation enables wineries to expand their food options with pasta, seafood, hot sandwiches, etc. These additions would not require wineries to serve a wider variety of food, just broaden their current selection.
2. Wineries are often in rural locations that have fewer food options in the surrounding areas, so this will give Marylanders and tourists additional food options
3. More food options at wineries promote public safety as food slows the rate at which a person's body absorbs alcohol
4. This is what many of my constituents and others want – the ability to have a nice meal at a winery – paired with Maryland-made wine

There are two included sponsor amendments; the first is technical – it preserves the current ability of the wineries to sell wine for off-premises consumption. The second amendment clarifies the legislative intent dating back to the Winery Modernization Act of 2010 that wineries are able to “prepare” and serve foods – such as pizzas, chili, soup, and baked goods, which wineries are already compliant with.

With that, we will turn it over to the rest of our panel, who will explain the impact this will have on their businesses.

Thank you for your time, and I urge a favorable report on this legislation.