

**Committee:** Finance Committee

**Testimony on:** SB672

**Position:** Favorable

23 February 2023

Chair Griffith, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and the members of the Finance Committee,

The University of Maryland – College Park, Student Government Association supports SB672 that authorizes students participating in educational classes to taste alcoholic beverages in the classroom setting. As a student in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and a student leader heavily involved around campus, I know this legislation will open up an important resource for students studying fermentation, agriculture, viticulture, agribusiness, and more.

Growing up, I spent a lot of time in the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve, exploring agritourism based farms and vineyards. In high school, I worked for a small restaurant in my hometown that taught me about local agriculture and craft alcohol. From then on, I was immersed in learning about how my local economy depends on these sectors. The agriculture and alcohol industries are vital to the state. Having a bustling craft alcohol industry, the agritourism benefit of valued businesses like cideries, local breweries, and wine tours is highly impactful. This impacted my educational decisions, as I chose to major in Agricultural and Resource Economics, with the career goal of participating in the agriculture and natural resources policy-making process.

In college, I am writing my undergraduate thesis about the impacts of California wine country on social, political, and racial stratification in the region. I learn about the impacts of vineyards and wine making on the environment, on the economy, on the dynamics of the industry. The alcohol industry is growing, particularly in Maryland, and we will need educated students to participate in it and be the next generation of brewers, sommeliers, wine-makers, vineyard managers, and more. The fermentation science classes that this legislation will allow will educate this generation. As a student whose education has been directly impacted by related courses, experiential learning opportunities, and working for these businesses, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB672.

Thank you,



*Meghana Kotraiah*  
*Student Government Association, Speaker of the Legislature*  
*University of Maryland — College Park*  
*mkotraia@umd.edu*