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MAJORITY WHIP

Appropriations Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Oral Testimony of Delegate Jazz Lewis
HB436– Prince George's County - Alcoholic Beverages - Development District License
PG 305-23
Before the Senate Finance Committee

Chair Griffith and members of the Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB436/PG305-23 to help establish a Development District around Prince George's Blueline Corridor, allowing restaurants to get licenses to sell beer and wine. This would ensure that those restaurants who decide to locate in the area will be able to set up business without having to wonder if they will be able to sell beer and wine to their patrons, a critical part of their business.

Last year, we authorized a bond initiative for \$400 million to invest in this historically disadvantaged community. By developing, investing, and attracting new businesses we are set to uplift the communities along the Blueline Corridor and this bill will help move us closer to that goal. We want to ensure that restaurants who choose to open in these areas are assured of their ability to sell beer and wine. Right now, restaurants have to open, not knowing whether or not that they can get these licenses and this dissuades many businesses from locating in the area.

This bill seeks to add some certainty for those that open their doors in this area outlined in HB436I and to help promote the development that is planned for this area. Alongside the historic investment that the state has done for the area, this will be another added measure to ensure that the Blueline Corridor sees the kind of opportunity and development it has historically been left out of.

In the House this bill was also amended to allow for liquor stores in areas where there is an over-proliferation of these establishments to move to a new location should there not already be a store within one mile of that new location. This will help diffuse these stores that are located in communities that have an over-concentration of them. We also added an amendment to allow for one restaurant inside the Capitol Beltway to also have an off-sale license, so long as it is also located at least one mile from other liquor stores.

This bill will not only help us promote development and foster new businesses along the Blueline Corridor, but also tackle the over-proliferation of liquor stores throughout our County.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable vote.