

## **Support for HB 1032: Enhancing Maryland's Craft Beverage Tourism Through Road Signage**

I am writing to you in my capacity as a board member of Tenth Ward Distilling Company, and on behalf of the broader community of Maryland's alcohol manufacturers, to express our enthusiastic support for HB 1032. This bill proposes the establishment of a program for tourist area signage specifically designed for breweries, distilleries, and wineries. Such a program would enable our businesses to apply for and finance road signs advertising our locations as tourist attractions, a much-needed initiative that would significantly benefit the craft beverage industry in Maryland.

The absence of a dedicated program for distillery road signage in Maryland places us at a disadvantage compared to our counterparts in surrounding states, where such initiatives have proven successful in directing tourists and locals alike to tap rooms and tasting rooms. The ability to promote our brands through road signage is a vital tool for increasing visibility, attracting visitors, and enhancing the overall success of our business.

For Tenth Ward Distilling Company, the opportunity to participate in a tourist area signage program would be transformative. Despite the quality and appeal of our products, reaching potential visitors is a constant challenge, particularly given the rural or off-the-beaten-path locations of many craft beverage producers. Road signs would provide an invaluable means of directing traffic to our distillery, thereby increasing foot traffic, sales, and brand recognition.

The broader impact of such a program on Maryland's economy cannot be overstated. The Maryland alcohol manufacturing sector, representing over 275 breweries, distilleries, and wineries, plays a significant role in the state's economy, with an annual economic impact of \$3.4 billion. This sector generates \$52 million per year in tax revenue and supports over 33,500 jobs across manufacturing, agriculture, tourism, and hospitality industries. By enhancing the visibility of these businesses, HB 1032 would not only support the growth of individual producers but also contribute to the state's economic vitality and job creation.

Moreover, implementing a tourist area signage program aligns with broader efforts to promote Maryland as a premier destination for craft beverage tourism. Such initiatives are essential for maintaining competitiveness and ensuring that Maryland keeps pace with neighboring states that have recognized the value of supporting their craft beverage industries through similar measures.

I strongly urge your support for HB 1032. By voting in favor of this bill, you will be supporting not just the craft beverage industry but also the broader economic and tourism interests of Maryland. We are prepared to work closely with the state to implement this program effectively and ensure that it serves as a model for how to promote and support the craft beverage industry.

Thank you for considering our perspective on this important issue.

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