



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Monday, February 17, 2025**

**Testimony of Delegate Marlon Amprey in Support of House Bill 1379 Alcohol  
Beverages Modernization Act of 2025**

Dear Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, and Committee Members,

I am writing to express my support for HB1379, which seeks to amend existing regulations governing Class A alcoholic beverage licenses for food retailers and bring Maryland to the 21st Century like 46 other states nationwide. This bill presents a timely and necessary opportunity to modernize our licensing system, support local businesses, enhance consumer convenience, drive economic growth, and better serve the needs of communities across the state of Maryland—all while maintaining responsible oversight.

Currently, obtaining a Class A license is cumbersome and outdated for food retailers, limiting their ability to offer a wider variety of beverages that consumers expect and enjoy in most other states. This bill aims to address these challenges by allowing food retailers to purchase Class A licenses from existing holders under specific conditions, as well as enabling them to apply directly to local licensing boards for such licenses. By simplifying and streamlining this process, the bill seeks to open the door for food retailers to expand their product offerings, improve the shopping experience for consumers, and help bring food retail to communities that currently lack food options by helping thicken the thin margins that food retailers and grocery stores operate within.

Modernizing Maryland's liquor licensing laws to allow food retailers to obtain Class A licenses reflects the evolving preferences of consumers while strengthening the state's economy. Many residents rely on food retailers as their primary source for groceries, and offering beer and wine alongside other essentials provides a more convenient, streamlined shopping experience.

Maryland beer and winemakers are limited in being able to only contract and sell their products to local small outfitters stifling our breweries and wineries. By allowing national retailers to carry locally made beer and wine, we can create an economic ecosystem where our locally made beer and wine can contract with national retailers and eventually export more of our Maryland beverages helping grow our agricultural and beer and

wine-making community. By updating our system, we can keep these dollars within Maryland, benefiting local businesses and increasing state tax revenue. Importantly, this bill ensures a fair and structured approach that allows small, independent retailers to remain competitive while adapting to the modern marketplace. Several states, including California, Pennsylvania, and Colorado, as well as our neighbor Washington D.C., have already adopted similar policies with safeguards such as purchase limits and designated hours of sale, demonstrating that modernization can coexist with responsible regulation.

It is important to note that this bill includes several key safeguards to ensure responsible alcohol sales and consumption. For example, food retailers seeking to obtain Class A licenses must meet strict criteria and adhere to regulations established by their local licensing boards. These regulations may include requirements related to responsible service practices, employee training, and compliance with local alcohol laws. By upholding these standards, we can help prevent abuse and mitigate any potential negative impacts on public health and safety.

In summary, HB1379 represents a balanced and pragmatic approach to alcohol licensing reform in Maryland. By modernizing the licensing process, we can expand consumer choice, support local businesses, and stimulate economic development. I urge the committee to carefully consider the benefits of this bill and take decisive action to advance its passage.

**For these reasons, I urge you to vote favorably on HB1379.**

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marlon Amprey", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Delegate Marlon Amprey  
40<sup>th</sup> Legislative District of Maryland