



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 1229- MONTGOMERY COUNTY - ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES LICENSES - HEALTH AND SAFETY
MC 21-25

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN
MARCH 26TH, 2025

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Finance Committee,

There is a clear correlation between alcohol outlet density and the well being of a community that should be taken into account when approving new alcohol establishments. According to the CDC, about 178,000 people in the US died from excessive drinking each year in 2020 and 2021, which is an increase from 2016-2017 where there were 138,000 deaths annually¹. A study on Baltimore City found that if alcohol outlet density was decreased by 1 quintile, it would result in 51 less homicides a year, 764 less disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), and \$63.7 million less in victim and criminal justice system costs².

As the statute currently stands, the boards who approve licenses for new alcohol outlets do not need to consider the cumulative impact a new outlet would have on the health & safety of a community. This is a gap in the process that MC 21-25 seeks to remedy. The overall intent is to ensure the boards look at the bigger picture when making these decisions and consider public input from the affected community. Please note that this requirement would not affect any already approved licenses, it would simply require increased consideration for new licenses.

This bill will:

Require the Board to consider the density of existing retail establishments licensed in the County to sell alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption, and the direct and indirect consequences that this pre-existing density has on the public health and safety of the community, **before** deciding whether to approve a new application and issue a new license permitting the sale of alcoholic beverages for off premises consumption.

Therefore, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 1229.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/facts-stats/index.html>

² Trangenstein PJ, Eck RH, Lu Y, Webster D, Jennings JM, Latkin C, Milam AJ, Furr-Holden D, Jernigan DH. The Violence Prevention Potential of Reducing Alcohol Outlet Access in Baltimore, Maryland. J Stud Alcohol Drugs. 2020 Jan;81(1):24-33. doi: 10.15288/jsad.2020.81.24. PMID: 32048598; PMCID: PMC7024813. [link](#)