

HB1303

TO: House Economic Matters Committee

FROM: James Reece Peak III, Baltimore County

RE: House Bill 1303 – Alcoholic Beverages – Class A License – Food Retailers

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: February 17, 2026

Chair Valderrama, Vice Chair Charkoudian, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to urge a **favorable** report on **House Bill 1303**. Maryland is currently one of only four states that still prohibit grocery stores from selling beer and wine—an outdated policy that nearly 80% of Marylanders want to change. Allowing "one-stop shopping" is a commonsense modernization that respects the busy schedules of Maryland families by saving time and reducing unnecessary travel.

Beyond convenience, this bill is vital for the economic health of our communities. Grocery stores operate on razor-thin margins, and allowing beer and wine sales provides a critical revenue stream that can prevent store closures, particularly in rural and underserved "food deserts." By strengthening these essential community anchors, we ensure more Marylanders have reliable access to fresh food and local jobs.

Experience in 46 other states demonstrates that grocery stores and independent liquor stores can thrive together. **HB 1303** simply brings Maryland in line with the rest of the country while prioritizing consumer choice and economic stability. For these reasons, I respectfully request a **favorable** report on **HB 1303**.

Sincerely,

James Reece Peak III

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