

March 2nd, 2026

TO: House Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Kate Simms, Baltimore

RE: Alcoholic Beverages - Class A License - Retail Establishments (Alcoholic Beverages Modernization Act of 2026)

POSITION: Support

Dear members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

I am writing to request your support for House Bill 1303 Alcoholic Beverages - Class A License - Retail Establishments (Alcoholic Beverages Modernization Act of 2026). Grocery stores are economic anchors in our communities across Maryland. They create local jobs, generate tax revenue, support nearby small businesses, and increase access to fresh food. When a grocery store closes, the economic and social ripple effects can be devastating. This is particularly true for working-class neighborhoods and rural areas.

Allowing grocery stores to sell beer and wine is a sensible way to make it easier for them to operate and remain viable. At the same time, experience in the 46 states where this is already permitted demonstrates that independently owned liquor stores can continue to thrive by offering curated selections, knowledgeable service, and unique products.

This legislation supports economic growth without eliminating opportunity for existing retailers, which is why I enthusiastically request a favorable report on HB 1303

In addition, attached to this testimony is a community letter that was recently sent to Senate President Bill Ferguson, signed by over 70 Baltimore-area community leaders, requesting support for HB 1303

Thank you,

Kate Simms

1630 Lancaster St,

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Kate Simms
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o/b/o Baltimore Community Leaders

February 9, 2026

Senate President Bill Ferguson
State House, H-107
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re. Community support for SB75: Beer and wine sales in grocery stores

President Ferguson:

We, the undersigned Baltimore City community leaders & members, respectfully urge you to support Senate Bill 75 sponsored by Senator Antonio Hayes, which allows beer and wine sales in grocery stores.

Maryland remains one of only a few states that prohibits grocery stores from selling beer and wine—an outdated restriction that no longer reflects how residents shop or live. These laws create unnecessary inconvenience for consumers, forcing separate trips for everyday purchases that are combined in most other states.

Allowing grocery stores to sell beer and wine would provide greater convenience for Maryland families while supporting local retailers and their workers. Grocery stores already operate under strict regulations and have extensive experience with age verification and responsible sales. Modernizing the law would bring Maryland in line with national norms while maintaining strong safeguards.

Public polling and community engagement consistently show broad support for this change. Marylanders want updated laws that reflect today's realities, promote consumer choice, and encourage grocery retail investment across Maryland.

We respectfully ask you to support legislation that allows grocery stores to sell beer and wine and helps move Maryland's alcohol laws into the modern era. Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to our community.

Sincerely,

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cc: Delegate Luke Clippinger
Delegate Robbyn Lewis
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