



February 20, 2026

Hon. Pamela Beidle, Chair
Hon. Antonio Hayes, Vice-Chair
Maryland Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senators Beidle and Hayes:

This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, a national trade association representing producers and marketers of distilled spirits in the United States in support of SB 72 - Baltimore County - Alcoholic Beverages - Sale for Off-Premises Consumption.

The bill would allow Baltimore County restaurants and bars to sell cocktails-to-go as long as the order is accompanied by a food purchase; is in an original container or a container closed with a cap, cork, seal, or lid with no holes for straws or sipping; proof of age is provided; and all local licensing board requirements are met.

As you know, Maryland allowed cocktails to-go on a temporary basis during the pandemic to support struggling hospitality businesses which represent more than 250,000 restaurant jobs across the state. Unfortunately, that law was allowed to sunset on June 30, 2023. Maryland is one of only four states to cease cocktails to-go following the pandemic. Meanwhile, **32 states and Washington, D.C. have adopted the practice permanently.**

What started as a lifeline to the hospitality industry has been a resounding success with business owners and consumers. Now, cocktails to-go have become a regular part of takeout dining for adult consumers in addition to providing stability for hospitality businesses as they continue to recover from the lasting impacts of COVID-19. These businesses still face challenges including supply chain disruptions, staffing shortages and inflation.

From the standpoint of responsibility, the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States and the spirits industry as a whole are committed to responsible consumption and encourage moderation for adults who choose to drink alcohol. As the legislation makes clear, cocktails to-

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go are intended for home consumption and all laws governing alcohol consumption and the prohibitions on drinking while driving must always be observed.

The future of the hospitality industry will be dependent upon many factors outside of the control of licensees, and this practice is something we believe is valuable to their continued recovery and long-term growth. We encourage the committee to support this important legislation and provide Baltimore County's hospitality businesses with this extra measure of flexibility in serving its customers.

We appreciate your consideration of our views regarding SB 72. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or our Maryland counsel, Hannah Garagiola.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Smith".

Emily Smith
Vice President State Public Policy
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cc: Members of the Senate Finance Committee