



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

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

I am writing to express my support of the proposed legislation **SB714: Washington County - Mobile Food Service Facilities and Semipermanent Food Service Facilities - Toilet and Lavatory Facilities**. My name is Molly McCook, and I am a current resident and small business owner in Washington County, MD.

Less than a year ago, we opened Lightsome Coffee, our dream business a small coffee trailer. Since our first day of operation we have remained in the same location, working hard to build something meaningful for our community. As new business owners, we have quickly realized that the most important and rewarding part of our work is creating a space where people can gather, connect, and feel welcome. We poured our hearts into creating a beautiful space for the community, including placing temporary picnic tables around our camper. The tables were constantly filled with patrons throughout the week.

Within a month of opening, this was quickly shut down by the health department, threatening our license and ability to operate if the picnic tables were ever placed out. For young, first-time business owners who had invested everything into opening a compliant small business, this was both devastating and frightening. We quickly removed the tables worried about how this would impact our business and the community we had worked so hard to build. Throughout the rest of the summer, we had many people bringing their own chairs and blankets to be able to gather and continue using our little space. This proved that there was a desire in the community to gather and connect, but no means to meet this desire.

This proposed bill will allow small businesses like mine to foster a sense of connection once again. People come together over coffee. Having the ability to invite them to stay and share time with one another would truly be a dream come true, not just for business owners, but for the communities we serve. I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Molly McCook, Part-Owner of Lightsome Coffee