

E L I T E



S P I C E

February 24, 2026

Opposition to House Bill 1229 / Senate Bill 886 – Consumer Protection and Labor and Employment – Food Service Facilities and Minimum Wage

To the Members of the Government, Labor, and Elections Committee of the Maryland House of Delegates:

My name is Sharon Bar, and I am the Owner of Elite Spice, Inc. in Jessup, Maryland. We have proudly operated in Maryland for 38 years and currently employ approximately 750 people in the State of Maryland. I am writing in opposition to HB 1229 / SB 886.

I understand and respect the intent behind this legislation. I care deeply about our employees and about ensuring they are compensated fairly. However, the scale and structure of this proposal would create economic consequences that businesses like mine simply cannot absorb without significant disruption.

Raising the minimum wage to \$25 per hour represents a 67% increase from today's rate. Based on our current workforce and payroll structure, this proposal would increase our annual wage costs by approximately \$8.5 million. When payroll taxes and benefit costs are included, the total impact exceeds \$10 million per year.

This level of increase would force difficult decisions — including raising prices to our customers, slowing investment, reducing expansion plans, or reassessing staffing levels and hours. These are not theoretical concerns; they are real operational realities.

The impact would not be limited to entry-level employees. Because of wage compression, increases at the base level ripple throughout the entire organization, affecting supervisory and skilled roles as well.

I am not opposed to fair wages. I am concerned about sustainability — for our business, for our employees, and for Maryland's economic competitiveness.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose HB 1229 / SB 886.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Bar', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sharon Bar  
Vice President of Administration, Owner  
Elite Spice, Inc.  
Jessup, Maryland