

Support SB 623

Chair Wells, Vice-Chair Kerr and Members of the GLE Committee,

My name is Raj Singh, I proudly own the Waldorf Cigar Bar and Lounge in Waldorf, MD. As an existing license holder, I support SB 623 and the pathway it creates for license conversion.

We purchased our business, in 2013 from a previous owner. Since 2013, we have continued operating in that same framework, serving the Waldorf community in Charles County for the past 13 years.

We serve a consistent, mature customer base, generally 45 and older, many of whom are working professionals. It is a niche market, but a stable one, and one that contributes to the local economy. We have also built a team of employees who depend on this business, and we take that responsibility seriously.

With compliance in mind, we have abided with all legal operational guidelines thus far and do not stray from our strict compliance. I believe that a business like mine, one that has operated in good faith for over a decade now, should be allowed to continue operating per the safeguard that SB 623 will provide upon passage. With that in mind, I appreciate that SB 623 provides a clear and structured way for businesses like mine to transition into the new framework.

I am fully supportive of the safeguards included in the bill and committed to operating within them. My goal is not to push the boundaries of the law, but to run a stable, compliant business that aligns with the intent of this legislation. Our customers, who again happen to be mature professionals, have the disposable income that benefits the state and my family in the creation of revenue.

More than anything, I am looking for consistency and the ability to move forward without unnecessary disruption. I seek to avoid any potential risk to my business and our operations. I am simply seeking to maintain my place in a market I have responsibly operated in for years, remain competitive, and continue serving my Waldorf community.

The conversion provisions allow for that, and I would encourage the General Assembly to maintain them so existing operators can continue operating responsibly while coming into full compliance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Raj Singh