



Peter Franchot  
Comptroller

## TESTIMONY OF COMPTROLLER PETER FRANCHOT

### Support - House Bill 12 - Alcoholic Beverages - Sale or Delivery for Off-Premises Consumption

*Economic Matters Committee*

*February 19, 2021*

Chairman Davis, Vice Chairman Dumais and members of the Committee, it is my pleasure to provide testimony in **support** of **House Bill 12 - Alcoholic Beverages - Sale or Delivery for Off-Premises Consumption**. I would like to thank Delegate Watson and Senator Hettleman for sponsoring this important legislation, and the Committee for providing the opportunity for my testimony to be heard.

Last March, as the COVID-19 pandemic caused the closure of nearly every aspect of our economy, I worked with the Governor to promulgate executive orders that permitted restaurants, bars, and alcohol manufacturers to sell alcohol for off-premise consumption or delivery. Today, nearly one year later, I am convinced that this flexibility saved countless small businesses from total ruin by providing an opportunity for revenue when most other sources had dried up. And although these policies loosened or removed existing restrictions on the sales and delivery of alcohol products, I am very happy to report that none of the state's local liquor boards reported incidences of public harm resulting from these activities engaged in by businesses licensed by my office's Field Enforcement Division.

As we continue to grapple with the short, medium, and long-term effects of this pandemic, we should take the time to recognize where accommodations made during the duress of this unprecedented emergency can and should be made permanent. This legislation helps recognize that these activities - the sale of alcohol for off-premise consumption and delivery - can be conducted safely, and should remain an option for properly-licensed businesses to employ in the future.

For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request a **favorable report** for House Bill 12. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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