

Respected Chair and Legislative Members,

SB 763 states:

“Establishing a certain exception to the prohibition against issuing certain retail alcoholic beverages licenses for use in conjunction with or on the premises of certain establishments; requiring a local licensing board to issue a Class A beer or beer and wine license for use in conjunction with or on the premises of certain self-service or delivery-based grocery establishments”

I respectfully request you to

This bill essentially puts Wine & Spirits in the Grocery and other chain stores. I would like to share my viewpoints against allowing Grocery/Chain stores:

**Employment:** Proposed bill, if implemented will result in 1.4 net loss in Jobs. More than 7000 licensees in the state of MD employ more than 115,000 residents with payrolls exceeding \$1.7 billion. Studies have shown that if licenses are issued to supermarkets and chain stores, the employment within the industry will drop significantly and payrolls will shrink. This submission is not ours, it has been floored by many payroll processors and economic analyst across the state.

**Competition:** The supporters of bill 763 claim that small retailers are afraid of the competition and that is why opposing this bill. The truth is: providing liquor licenses to supermarkets will create unlevelled and unjustified, one-sided competition.

**Convenience:** The supporters of supermarkets getting liquor license also claim that having alcoholic beverages in supermarket makes it convenient for them to buy alcoholic beverages. There are more than 7000 licensees in the state and many of them are located in the same shopping center as the grocery stores/supermarkets. How much more convenient cant it get. In addition to the packaged goods stores located next to supermarkets, there are also some licensees residing in free-standing buildings making it even more convenient for consumers. If these types of bills are passed and implemented most of these packaged goods stores will be driven out of business and then consumers will be forced to make a trip to a grocery store and to spend time in long lines, a trip they are accomplishing at packaged good stores in a few minutes, at the most.

**MD is Small Business Friendly:** Maryland has traditionally been a small business friendly state. Recent attacks on their existence by politicians siding with big chain store companies are ill founded and promoted by financial backing and donations by these big companies. Sure, small retailers don't have the same amount of money as big box chain stores but small retailers

sure are passionate about serving their customers. We know our customers by their first names and know their family members, their life stories and have the ability to personally engage with them, there is NO WAY big box stores can provide that level of personal focus and attention to valued customers. The continual effort to hurt small retailers by allowing big box stores to sell alcohol is BAD for the state, retailers, and most of all consumers.

**Denied Bills & License Applications:** We should note that bills that attempted to achieve that same result in the past have been denied unanimously. Examples: PG 760-12 was denied that attempted to provide license to supermarkets. There are several examples of bills that were denied by the same committee in the past based on potential economic impact on small retailers, safety and other regulatory reasons, and so on. In the pandemic world, things have not changed to better for most small businesses, in fact, they have gotten worse. There are NO reasons why this committee should override their past voting records, specifically in these challenging times, and revisit the same legislation again and again!

I sincerely thank all of you for your time and consideration and hope that you will vote against SB 763 and HB 0996.

Sincerely,

Birju Sheth