

Oppose SB858
Kim Lawson
Fishpaws Marketplace
954 Ritchie Hwy
Arnold, Md 21012
Anne Arundel County
klawson@fishpawsmarket.com

I'm writing in opposition to HB858. My business, Fishpaws Marketplace is a third-generation alcohol retailer in Anne Arundel County which dates back to 1935. My family purchased the business in 1983 and now my children are working the business. We employ between 20 and 25 people depending on the season. We donate at a minimum \$10,000 yearly to local charities. Not only do we employ local residents but are supported by distributors, breweries, distilleries which encompasses about 50 – 60 people weekly which includes salespeople, drivers, and support personnel. We carry over 260 local beers, wines and spirits to support locally made products.

I know the opposition is touting convenience as the reason for this legislation. Maryland is positioned to best serve the customer. We have licensees in every shopping center which houses a grocery store so the goods are available in the same shopping trip for the consumer. The supermarkets and chains aren't going to employ additional employees that would offset the number of employees lost by a current licensee in the center which will probably because they won't be able to compete. Currently many licensees are offering home delivery which adds to convenience for the consumer.

I'm in a unique position because my father has worked all aspects in the liquor business. He worked as a Maryland wholesaler, Maryland retailer and as a multistate manager and international manager for Remy Amerique and for a Florida retailer. He has told me many times that Maryland in fact is one of the best states for the consumer. Our system allows the best selection available to the consumer because of the free market which allows small independently owned distributors and suppliers to market to both independent on and off premise outlets. Large chains only sell the top selling SKU/s so with the elimination of independent retailers the selection and availability will not be available to the public. The small distributors and locally made products won't be carried in these chain operations. If you have ever traveled to chain market states then you can attest to the more limited selection versus Maryland stores.

The bill automatically will allow these outlets 1300 to 1500 additional outlets with no regard to saturation of a market area or the legal control of alcohol, a controlled substance.

I ask you to oppose this bill. Let's support local small business in all ways by keeping jobs, taxes, local product sales in Maryland. Let's keep Maryland pride in Maryland.