



February 17, 2022

RE: HB 858 – Alcoholic Beverages – Class A Licenses – Retail Grocery Establishments

Dear House Economic Matters Committee Members,

My name is Julian (Blackie) Wills and I am the President and CEO for Dash In Convenience Stores, a Maryland-based company with 41 outlets in the state employing about 800 between these outlets. We are owned by The Wills Group, Inc., a Maryland-based company founded over 95 years ago and I am part of the fourth generation of family leadership for the organization. We have community-based values and donate over \$500,000 annually to our charitable partners including various food banks.

I am writing in support of HB 858 as I believe Maryland needs to expand Class A licenses of Alcoholic Beverages to other retailers. The current laws on alcoholic beverages are archaic and it is time for reform. We serve thousands of customers at each of our stores every day to meet their convenience needs. We offer many non-alcoholic beverages, prepared food, and healthy snacks to customers. Why should these same customers have to go to a separate location to purchase alcoholic beverages? Our stores are typically located near neighborhoods making it an ideal stop to pick up a bottle of wine or 6-pack of beer before returning home after a day's work. We also offer the ability for consumers to get in and out quickly as that has always been the hallmark of our business. The Maryland consumer deserves to have more options for purchasing alcoholic beverages, so I encourage you move forward with this proposed legislation which would increase competition for licenses with grocery stores and other retailers.

Thank you for your time and thank you in advance for being a champion of small business.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JBWills III'.

Julian (Blackie) Wills III
CEO & President
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