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Maine Legislature
Committee On Veterans and Legal Affairs
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

April 8, 2025

Dear Chair Hickman and Members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

I am writing today on behalf of Rusty Lantern Markets, a convenience store chain that owns and operates 18 stores in the state of Maine. We are the definition of a local Maine business. We are headquartered in Brunswick, and have a location 1.3 miles from the Maine Legislature, with locations across our state.

Our locations focus on food and coffee services, and we are respectful of the communities we inhabit and want to exceed customer expectations with friendly staff, clean facilities, delicious food, gourmet coffee, and local/craft product selections. We are proud to offer Mainers competitive salaries and wages, health and team benefits, training programs, a 'promote from within' culture, clean working conditions, and a safe, supportive working environment.

I am writing today in support of LD 1376, An Act to Increase the Acceptable Level of Alcohol in a Low-Alcohol Spirits Product and to Increase Availability of Those Products. As a business, we are uniquely positioned because of the broad geography our stores cover, statewide. We are a Maine taxpayer, and brick and mortar retailer supporting over 250 employees. We need to continue to be competitive in a challenging business environment, and access to these items will help our business grow, and in turn grow the local economy.

Buying these RTD's from the distributors means we are not restricted on our margin. The improved access and availability of these beverages will significantly increase excise tax revenue to the state.

RTD's are a growing category, and our customers are looking for these higher ABV options. There are five other control states (Iowa, Idaho, Ohio, Michigan and Vermont) with an ABV% greater than Maine's existing 8% ABV, and it's growing.

We would like to partner with the state in growing our business, and the local economy. Passing LD 1376 does just that.

Kevin Colangelo
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