

Testimony of Josh Tweedie

In Opposition to LD 1376 An Act to Increase the Acceptable Level of Alcohol in a Low-alcohol Spirits Product and to Increase Availability of Those Products

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

My name is Josh Tweedie, and I am the proud owner of three IGA grocery stores in Northern Maine—located in Fort Fairfield, Mars Hill, Presque Isle—as well as The Maple Pig Bar & Grill, a full-service restaurant and a growing catering and food truck business. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony today in opposition to LD 1376.

As someone deeply embedded in the food and beverage industry, I live and breathe the realities of tight margins, consumer habits, and the pressures to provide a wide selection of quality products to my customers.

LD 1376, by redefining low-volume alcohol to include products with up to 15% ABV, presents serious unintended consequences. While the intention may be to expand access to new emerging products, the reality is that this would sweep in a significant number of spirits-based canned cocktails and other higher-ABV products into a broader retail setting. This directly undermines the current agency store model—something that many of us have invested in and rely upon.

Maine’s population is relatively small and dispersed. **The customer-pie is only so big, and there's only so much room for new market entrants—regardless of how exciting or innovative the products may be.**

I’ve made real investments to bring customers into my stores—not just for liquor, but for everything else that goes with it. We count on that foot traffic to sell other items with stronger margins that help support the overall business.

By opening up access to products permitted for agency stores, LD 1376 risks diluting the unique value that makes these stores a destination and an investment. This isn’t about protectionism—this is about recognizing that some products drive traffic, and when those are no longer a differentiator, we lose more than just a sale—we lose a customer’s reason to walk through the door.

I understand that this Committee hears many arguments around direct-to-consumer shipments and market access. **But I urge you to consider that not all forms of “access” lead to a stronger marketplace. Oversaturation is real.** And in Maine, where markets are finite, a constant expansion without balance could destabilize those who have built sustainable models under current laws.

Please reject LD 1376. Let’s protect what works and continue to foster a competitive, thoughtful retail environment that benefits both consumers and businesses.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Josh Tweedie
President/Owner
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