

**Testimony of Mark Kelley, Owner, Country Farms Market
In Opposition to LD 1376**

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

My name is Mark Kelley, and I'm the owner of Country Farms Market, a proud Maine agency liquor store and convenience retailer. I'm here today to speak in strong opposition to LD 1376.

As an agency store, we've made significant investments to responsibly offer spirits to our community. These investments aren't just financial—it's years of building trust, training staff, and establishing safe practices around alcohol sales. LD 1376 proposes to take that away by allowing the widespread sale of "low volume" spirits across all alcohol retail models, removing the agency store advantage that has helped small, locally owned businesses like mine thrive.

Our store is located near a snowmobile and ATV trail network. This brings a steady flow of outdoor recreation traffic to our location, especially in the winter and summer months. With that comes a heightened sense of responsibility. We understand that high-ABV products, especially in single-serve packaging, come with increased risk. That's why we sell canned cocktails, we do not promote or sell them as grab-and-go beverages. We avoid single-can sales, grouping them in multipacks to ensure they're not treated like a casual refreshment. These are deliberate decisions we make as stewards of public safety—and they're decisions I fear won't be as closely considered if these products are available in every beer and wine retailer.

LD 1376 also creates a competitive imbalance. While agency stores like mine operate on a state-set 18% margin for spirits—which is significantly lower than the margins we earn on other product categories—we accept that because spirits are a draw. They bring people into our stores. Once inside, customers often purchase other higher-margin items such as snacks, drinks, prepared foods, and other locally made products. This broader sales model is what allows our small business to survive.

If canned cocktails and other ready-to-drink spirits are pulled from agency stores and offered everywhere, that system breaks. We lose a key incentive for customers to visit our store in the first place.

I urge you to vote against this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Mark Kelley
Owner, Country Farms Market