

Robert Bryant
Bryant's Brewing, Hartland
LD 1456

Thank you Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and Members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Bryant, I am a resident of Hartland, ME and I'm writing to the Committee as the owner of Bryant's Brewing. I appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on the proposed changes in LD 1456 and add my voice in support of this bill.

After a long and relatively successful career in Information Technology, I retired in Hartland determined to "give back" to the area where I grew up in Central Maine. Pittsfield, Hartland, Newport, and the Central Maine area was a bustling, vibrant group of communities when I was a child. Since that time, the area has seen significant decline with many businesses closing and properties falling into neglect and disrepair.

For that reason, my son and I started a nano brewery in my garage on Great Moose Lake in Hartland as an incubator to grow into the Central Maine Area. Currently, my son and I operate our brewery and coffee roastery, with plans to grow into the surrounding area. Our plans foresee expansion of our brewery and taproom into a restaurant, expanded coffee roasting and sales, along with a restaurant providing job opportunities to 15+ people.

However, our journey has not been easy. While we've created a strong brand and local identity, we've been stymied by regulatory challenges over wastewater and a lack of employee availability. As a small brewery, being allowed to only offer our own products has limited our ability to offer other products such as our fellow brewer's or local wines and ciders. By creating the opportunity for us to take on outside products as well as extend our brewery into other locations facilitates our growth opportunities.

Current law allows for a virtually unlimited number of retail licenses without the requirement of meaningful production requirements that devalues the investments we hope to make. We're starting to see a proliferation of businesses representing themselves as craft brewers but who technically only brew a tiny amount of beer just to satisfy the technical requirements of their manufacturing license. By adapting the statute to ensure equal access-to-market for all beverage manufacturers, we will ensure a fair and supportive playing field to facilitate our growth and the growth of locally made craft beverages.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I ask for you to support this important legislation.