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LD 2036

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding changes to Maine's Bottle Bill.

My name is Dan Tarr, and I am the owner of Easterly Wine, a small wine distribution business in Belfast, Maine. I specialize in distributing high-quality, small production wines, many of which are produced by family-owned wineries in Europe and other regions. I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to the portion of the Bottle Bill that requires UPCs on wine labels.

While I understand and appreciate the intent of standardizing product identification and improving regulatory oversight, a mandatory UPC requirement would have significant unintended consequences for small distributors. Many high-end and artisanal wines do not carry UPCs and, in many cases, cannot reasonably add them. These producers often bottle in very small quantities, use traditional labeling methods, or export to multiple markets with different regulatory requirements. Requiring UPCs would in many cases make it impossible for these wines to be sold in our state at all. As a small distributor, I do not have the leverage to require foreign or small producers to redesign labels or alter their bottling processes solely for one market. The result would be a loss of unique products, reduced consumer choice, and a competitive disadvantage for small businesses like mine.

Maine's wine market is recognized in the industry as being far more sophisticated than its population size would indicate. This bill would also affect restaurants, retailers, and consumers who value access to distinctive, high-quality wines that are rare, special, and highly sought-after.

Ultimately, the economic impact would fall disproportionately on small businesses while offering limited additional benefit in terms of compliance or enforcement.

I respectfully urge the Committee to consider aspects to the bill, such as exemptions for limited-production wines, alternative identification methods, or thresholds that recognize the realities of small-scale wine production and distribution.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate the Committee's work and your willingness to hear from small business owners who will be directly affected by this legislation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dan Tarr  
Easterly Wine  
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