



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

My name is Abe Furth, I am a resident of Old Town and I'm here today as the co-owner of Orono Brewing and Wild Maine Vodka Seltzer. I appreciate the opportunity to add my voice in support of LD 1456.

My partners and I founded Orono Brewing Company (OBC) in 2014. We started off as a four person team, and we are now a team of forty. We have invested millions of dollars into equipment, and into purchasing and revitalizing an abandoned concrete plant. We've provided great jobs to many Mainers, and attracted many young families to Maine with employment opportunities at OBC.


We're not alone in our commitment to Maine, many other breweries have also invested a huge amount of effort, time and capital into strengthening the Maine economy and Maine communities. Along the way we have not just created jobs within the brewery, we have also supported Maine electricians, plumbers, painters, engineers, architects, carpenters, welders, and the list goes on and on.

To maintain a thriving craft beverage industry in Maine we need to maintain access to market. I believe the three tier system, with distributor, supplier and retailer being separate, is important to maintain equal access to market.

I support LD 1456 because the current law allows for a virtually unlimited amount of retail licenses, and the absence of meaningful production requirements devalue the investment I've made in my brewery and employees. We're starting to see a proliferation of businesses representing themselves as craft brewers but who 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 better ensure a fair and supportive playing field long term for Maine based job creation, small business manufacturing, and the continued health of locally made craft beverages.

Thank you for your time and consideration today, and I ask for you to support this important legislation. I'm happy to answer questions or speak further on the subject as needed.

Cheers,



Abe Furth