

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

My name is Colleen Croteau, I am a resident of Yarmouth and I'm here today as the COO of Maine Beer Company. I appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on the proposed changes and add my voice in support of this bill.

I started at Maine Beer Company in 2012 as employee number four. Since then, the company has grown from less than 3000 barrels to almost 50,000 barrels and over 100 employees.

The work of the Maine Brewers' Guild has been instrumental to our success, allowing tasting rooms to charge for beer just before we moved to our Freeport location. We see over 400,000 visitors a year, and provide the opportunity for people to taste the beer that is produced on site. We also offer a place to hold charitable events, and host Community pizza nights every Wednesday with 20% of food and beverage sales going back to the nonprofit.

In 16 years, we've gone through multiple expansions, investing not only in brewing equipment and facility improvements, but also in employee benefits and wages. We pay 100% of full-time employees' health insurance and contribute a minimum of 5% towards retirement.

We were founded by two brothers with a mission to "do what's right" and are proud to remain an independent family-owned business.

The intent of this bill is to put parameters around a concept that was meant to promote and protect craft breweries in Maine. Without a clear definition of a "manufacturing facility" the opportunity exists to create business models that don't operate in the spirit of current regulations.

Maine is recognized nationwide for the quality of craft beer in our state. The impact we have on the economy and our communities cannot be ignored. The consequences of exploiting the law include limiting market access for small breweries, minimizing job growth and support of local manufacturers and vendors, and potentially damaging the reputation of craft beer in Maine.

This bill will help ensure fair market access and is good for small business, community support, and the future of the craft beer industry in Maine.

Thank you for your time and I ask for your support of this important legislation.