

**TESTIMONY FROM ANTHONY LYONS**

**LD 1551 AN ACT TO SUPPORT MAINE EATING AND DRINKING ESTABLISHMENTS BY ALLOWING VENDORS TO OPERATE ON THE PREMISES OF AN ESTABLISHMENT WITH A LIQUOR LICENSE**

Good Afternoon,

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee,

My name is Anthony Lyons and I am a resident of Auburn, today representing the Maine Winery Guild and also as owner of WillowsAwake Winery in Leeds, Maine. Our 67-acre parcel of land is home to WillowsAwake Winery supported by eight acres of vineyard, a state of art winery production facility, a tasting room and the No.10 Eatery@WillowsAwake, a Class A Restaurant.

I appreciate the opportunity to offer comments **in support** of LD 1551 An Act to Support Maine Eating and Drinking Establishments by Allowing Vendors to Operate on the Premises of an Establishment with a Liquor License.

During the 131<sup>st</sup> Legislative session LD 1378 was introduced and passed into law allowing only Qualified Catering Services to provide liquor on the premises of a winery, small winery, brewery, small brewery, distillery or small distillery licensed under section 1355-A. In practice, the change only allowed one type of liquor licensee, a Qualified Catering Service, the privilege to furnish liquor at a licensed manufacturing establishment. This bill expands the privilege to include other licensed establishments, that is restaurants, Class A Restaurants, licensed lounges, etc to also serve food and liquor on the premises of another licensed establishment.

To use my business as an example: On the same contiguous parcel of land (some 67 acres, the “premises”) I operate WillowsAwake Winery as a licensed small winery. On the same premises, and some 100 feet away I operate No.10 Eatery, a licensed Class A Restaurant which operates year-round, however under current law I cannot cater food or liquor to my winery as the restaurant cannot hold a Qualified Catering Service license, even though under current law my Class A restaurant can cater food and alcohol for private events off-site.

This bill allows my licensed winery to be the “host establishment” and No.10 Eatery which is a licensed eating establishment, to be the “vendor”. My restaurant (“vendor”) can then sell liquor and food within the winery (“host establishment”) with one condition being that the winery being the “host establishment”) must supply the alcoholic beverages. I assume this condition ensures some level of tracking of purchased liquor for such events. If I were to suggest one change it would be to allow the “Vendor”, in my case my Class A Restaurant to also provide the alcoholic beverages, as those purchases are currently tracked as I can only purchase from licensed distributors.

The bill expands the business opportunities for licensed eating establishments, opportunities those establishments absolutely need in the current market environment.

I would also like to suggest that this bill be given Emergency status, waiting 90 days after the end of the session results in an entire summer season being lost.

Thank you for your time and I welcome any questions you may have at this time.