

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

My name is Abe Furth. I am the owner of Orono Brewing Company, a volunteer board member of the Maine Brewers' Guild, and a lifelong Mainer. I am here to speak in opposition to LD 2155.

My business partners and I founded Orono Brewing in 2014. We've invested millions of dollars in equipment, and we've revitalized a shuttered concrete plant into a thriving part of our community. We employ over forty people, and in 2025 we produced 15,000 bbls of craft beer and craft hard seltzer. We're one of the many breweries who have invested heavily in order to compete in Maine's very competitive and world renowned craft beer industry.

We entered this industry fully aware of the competitive and regulatory landscape. We strongly believe in the three tier system, and have invested accordingly. If Maine allowed suppliers, distributors and retailers to all share ownership we never would have opened a brewery in Maine - access to the retail business that we rely on would be choked out by a few powerful players. Partly because of the three tier system the Maine craft beer industry has flourished and has become a key part of Maine's economy and identity.

The three tier system works, and allows retailers, suppliers, and distributors a chance to succeed alongside each other. LD 2155 disregards the very framework of the three tier system, and destroys the thoughtful work that the Maine Brewers' Guild did last year when we brought forth LD 1456. As you will recall, this Committee passed LD 1456 last session to limit the number of on-premises retail liquor licenses that could be held by a manufacturer. Those limits were not arbitrary. They were the result of years of discussion among brewers and manufacturers who recognized that the absence of limits was threatening the integrity and sustainability of Maine's craft beverage industry. That legislation reflected a broad consensus among manufacturers and was carefully considered, thoughtful, and intentionally generous.

If passed, LD 2155 would accelerate consolidation and further concentrate retail access under common ownership. The practical effect would be to make it harder for small, independent producers to compete for shelf space, tap lines, and consumer attention — while rewarding larger entities based not on production, job creation, or local investment, but simply on timing or scale of retail holdings. I am also concerned about the permanent exemption for licensees issued on or before May 23, 2025. Creating carve-outs based on license date introduces inequity into the system and disadvantages newer and smaller businesses trying to enter the market today.

I respectfully urge the Committee to **strongly oppose LD 2155**. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abe Furth', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Abe Furth