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President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
130th Legislature

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Testimony in Support of LD 306
An Act To Temporarily Waive Certain Requirements for Relicensing for Restaurants That Serve Liquor

Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
February 22, 2021

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Troy Jackson and I represent the people of northern Aroostook County in Senate District 1. I am here today to testify in support of LD 306 "An Act To Temporarily Waive Certain Requirements for Relicensing for Restaurants That Serve Liquor."

Whether you are from Fort Kent or Kittery, you know that Maine is a small business state. Our small business owners take pride in their Yankee ingenuity and innovation, even in the most trying conditions. And over the last 11 months, there is no doubt that is exactly what they have had to face. Despite these new and uncharted problems, businesses have persevered while doing their best to follow health and safety protocols to keep their employees and customers safe.

The idea for this bill before us today was brought to me by my constituent Travis Guy at First Mile Brewing Fort Kent. First Mile started out as a very modest operation by a group of passionate homebrewers in the area and has grown considerably since — you can now find First Mile's craft beer in restaurants and stores in Aroostook County. I'm also proud to display an empty growler from First Mile in my office.

Travis wrote to me last winter, telling me that First Mile had been pursuing a restaurant license in addition to their licensure as a brewery. They wanted the option to put more local foods on their menu. However, in order to qualify for a restaurant license, a business must have at least 10 percent of its sales come from food. In the middle of an unprecedented pandemic, where indoor-dining is limited, this could prove a challenge for First Mile and many other businesses around the state. Travis suggested that restaurants be able to waive this requirement during the civil emergency, which is exactly what this bill

does. LD 306 would temporarily waive the requirement for food sales and only apply to the renewal of licenses that expire on or before January 1, 2022.

To me, this is a common-sense proposal that aims to support our restaurants who are finding creative ways to thrive and strengthen our economy as we begin to climb out of this pandemic. I want to thank Sen. Luchini for doing the leg work on this proposal and for bringing this will forward. Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to take any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Troy Jackson
President of the Maine Senate
Senate District 1