



Maine Brewers' Guild  
P.O. Box 2817  
South Portland, ME

April 16, 2021

Dear Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

My name is Sean Sullivan, and I am the executive director of the Maine Brewers' Guild, a nonprofit trade association which represents nearly every one of Maine's 156 licensed breweries.

I am here today to express support for including beer/ malt liquor in L.D. 1358.

For years, wineries have been able to ship wine directly to consumer's doors. In the past year, the pandemic has led to a dramatic increase in demand in direct-to-consumer shipping of everything, with beer being no exception.

Maine brewers have been doing their best to meet this demand within the bounds of current laws; many Maine brewers have been utilizing their own employees to make deliveries to Maine customers, a practice allowed under Maine law. Unfortunately, however, most of these breweries only offer these deliveries within a certain geographic range of their brewery, as the cost to send an employee to one distant location in Maine is often not viable. This bill solves for this problem.

A robust framework of licensing, legal compliance, and tax collection rules and laws exist to govern how wine gets from a winery to a Maine customer's doorstep, giving those wineries the chance to meet that consumer demand, safely. What this bill proposes, with an amendment to include beer and breweries, is simple: give brewers the same privilege to meet that consumer demand in Maine.

Today, Maine breweries can ship their beer to a customer's doorstep in Portsmouth, NH legally, but cannot ship to a customer in Kittery. With Maine's size, and demand for breweries' beers often following outside the local delivery area, we want to give brewers the chance to share their beers with beer fans around the state, using the pricing and logistics efficiencies of common carriers.

I am also here to support this bill as a result of what I'm seeing nationally. As an industry, we are seeing direct-to-consumer beer shipping laws passed around the country. With this bill, our members see an opportunity to ensure they can take the time to build out this business channel before they have to turn away more customers, and before they are behind their fellow competitors around the country. While direct-to-consumer sales may only represent a small fraction of overall beer sales by our average member, we believe these laws will give brewers their best chance to build lasting businesses, while also solving inefficiencies in the existing system.

It is for these reasons I am here to encourage this committee to vote in favor of including malt liquor and breweries into L.D. 1358 and supporting this bill.

Sincerely,

Sean M. Sullivan  
Executive Director, Maine Brewers' Guild