

Peter Bissell
Bissell Brothers
LD 1855

Thank you Senator Hickman, Representative Supica and Members of the Committee:
At Bissell Brothers, we are preparing to launch our own line of RTDs and alternative low-alcohol spirits products, and the landscape seems very confusing across the board, certainly including the tax rates of these products.

The legal landscape around these products at the state level seems unbelievably arbitrary and vague, and the amount being charged currently for state excise tax reflects that – I speak for almost everyone I’ve met in this industry when I say that we are happy to pay our fair share back to the State, but 6x the federal rate for these products seems prohibitively high.

The \$1.54/gallon Maine excise tax puts us at an extreme disadvantage when we compete against NH RTD manufacturers who pay .30/gallon for RTD excise tax, or MA manufacturers who pay \$1.10/gallon. The proposed rate of 60 cents/gallon is still far more than we pay for beer, but it would allow us to be more competitive with our New England and national competitors. The Maine craft beverage market is struggling, please correct this exorbitantly high excise tax on RTDs. Thank you for your time and consideration today, and I ask for you to support LD 1855. I’m happy to answer questions or speak further on the subject as needed.

Sincerely,
Peter Bissell
Bissell Brothers
Portland, Maine