

Ian Dorsey
Mast Landing Brewing Company
LD 1855

To: Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

From: Ian Dorsey, President, Mast Landing Brewing Company

Date: May 7, 2025

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 1855 – An Act to Impose an Excise Tax on
Spirits-based Cocktails Containing No More than 12 Percent Alcohol

Dear Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ian Dorsey, and I serve as President of Mast Landing Brewing Company, a Maine-owned craft brewery with taproom locations in Westbrook, Freeport, and Portland. In addition to our beer offerings, we produce Besides, a line of spirits-based canned seltzers crafted with the same care and purpose that defines our brewery's mission.

I am writing today in strong support of LD 1855, which proposes a more equitable tax structure for ready-to-drink (RTD) spirits-based beverages under 12% ABV.

As a producer of these beverages, I can tell you firsthand that the current tax structure places a disproportionate financial burden on small Maine companies like ours. We are currently taxed at significantly higher rates than producers of beer and wine products with comparable alcohol content. That imbalance adds strain to an industry already navigating increased costs for raw materials, labor, distribution, and compliance.

Every cent matters right now. Our company employs dozens of Mainers—from production and operations staff to front-of-house teams. We provide benefits, invest in workforce development, and do our part to keep Maine's craft beverage reputation nationally respected. Reducing this tax burden through LD 1855 would allow us to better absorb rising input costs, remain competitive in a saturated marketplace, and most importantly, continue providing jobs and stable income to the people who work hard every day to keep our business moving.

This legislation is about fairness, sustainability, and survival for Maine-based craft producers. Spirits-based RTDs like Besides should not be penalized for their base alcohol type when their ABV, packaging, and consumption context are identical to many malt-based or wine-based beverages already taxed at lower rates.

On behalf of my team and our growing network of supporters and consumers, I respectfully urge the committee to support LD 1855 and bring long-overdue tax equity to this rapidly evolving beverage category.

Thank you for your time and for considering the needs of Maine's independent craft producers.

Sincerely,
Ian Dorsey
President, Mast Landing Brewing Company