

Thank you, Senator Hickman, and Members of the Committee.

My name is Nick Bonadies. I am a resident of Portland and the President and one of the co-owners of Belleflower Brewing Company, a family-owned brewery run by my family and the Page family.

We currently employ 13 people, including the 4 owners.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today in opposition to LD 2155.

Maine's craft beverage industry did not grow by accident. It grew because of thoughtful legislation and strong community support that valued independent manufacturing, local ownership, and fair access to market.

Our natural resources and agricultural base have helped make Maine a national leader in craft beer, and all of us have invested heavily to honor that legacy.

Since opening our very small brewery, we have invested more than one million dollars in brewing equipment, infrastructure, and skilled trades. Building a production-capable facility in Maine is expensive and complex.

Maine law has historically maintained a careful balance between manufacturing and retail interests. That balance gave small producers confidence that investing in jobs and manufacturing would be met with fair market access.

Access to market remains one of the biggest challenges for us small producers.

Most of us operate on a narrow seasonal window, with summer tourism often determining whether we are profitable at all.

Visitors come to Maine seeking authentic experiences and products that reflect craftsmanship and place.

When minimal-production entities operate retail venues under manufacturing privileges, it undermines that authenticity and creates confusion about what a brewery truly is.

Last session, this Committee adopted limits on manufacturer-held retail licenses after years of thoughtful discussion and consideration.

LD 2155 would undo that work. By expanding retail license limits and creating retroactive exemptions based on license date, it would accelerate

consolidation and concentrate retail access under common ownership.

The result would be a system that rewards scale and timing of retail expansion over production, job creation, and local investment, making it harder for small, independent producers to compete.

I am especially concerned about the permanent exemption for licenses issued before May 23, 2025.

Carve-outs like this create inequity and disadvantage newer and smaller businesses trying to enter the market today and make the same investments we have already made.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose LD 2155. Thank you for your time and consideration. I'm happy to answer any questions.