



Maine Beer Company
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Thank you, Senator Hickman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Colleen Croteau and I am the COO of Maine Beer Company in Freeport, and I am writing to oppose LD 2155.

Maine Beer Company employs over 100 year-round employees and offers paid health insurance, retirement contributions, and paid time off, among other benefits, to all full-time staff. We've been in business since 2009 and now produce 50,000 barrels of beer annually with revenues exceeding \$30 Million. We are in the process of planning a \$20 Million expansion on our Freeport campus, which will allow us to more than double capacity and hire more Maine people. We use local ingredients when we can, and prioritize Maine vendors and suppliers to the extent possible.

Maine's craft beverage industry did not grow by accident. It grew because of strong community support and thoughtful legislation that recognized the importance of supporting true manufacturers and maintaining a balance between production and retail interests. Access to market remains one of the most significant challenges for small producers, and policies that concentrate retail opportunities threaten that access and the diversity of locally made products available to consumers.

As you recall, this Committee passed legislation last session to limit the number of on-premise retail liquor licenses that could be held by a manufacturer. Those limits were not arbitrary, but rather were the result of years of discussion among brewers and manufacturers who recognized that the absence of limits was threatening the integrity and sustainability of Maine's craft beverage industry. That legislation reflected a broad consensus among breweries and retailers, and was carefully considered, thoughtful, and intentionally generous.

LD 2155 seeks to undo that work. By effectively doubling the number of retail licenses a manufacturer may hold and retroactively exempting certain licensees from the limits adopted in 2025, this bill would accelerate consolidation and further concentrate retail access under common ownership. The practical effect would be to make it harder for small, independent producers to compete for shelf space, tap lines, and consumer attention—while rewarding larger entities based not on production, job creation, or local investment, but simply on timing or scale of retail holdings.

I am also concerned about the permanent exemption for licensees issued on or before May 23, 2025. Creating carve-outs based on license date introduces inequality into the system and disadvantages newer and smaller businesses trying to enter the market today while providing an unfair advantage to others.

Maine's craft beverage sector has thrived because state policies have supported local ownership, diversity, and competition. LD 2155 moves us in the opposite direction by encouraging consolidation and blurring the line between manufacturing and retail interests.

As a Maine brewery, we made, and are continuing to make, significant investments in manufacturing capacity and local jobs based on the balance established in current law. Weakening those protections undermines the fair and competitive environment that has allowed Maine's craft beverage industry to succeed.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **strongly oppose** LD 2155. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Colleen Croteau
Chief Operating Officer
Maine Beer Company