

Elizabeth Johnson
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LD 2160

My name is Liz Johnson. I'm a 25 year veteran of the hospitality industry, and a resident of Belfast, Maine. I am writing to voice my support for LD2160, because I believe local products are what make Maine's restaurant scene special. The small distillers in our state have had a lot of obstacles in their way, and I fear that without the removal of some red tape and fees, many of them will not survive. I would like to see our state government give them a hand, so that restaurants can continue to pour locally crafted liquor.

Over the course of my career, our state has become a leader in the national food and beverage scene. Chase's Daily, and Sammy's Deluxe – my most recent places of employment – have received recognition by the James Beard Awards and The New York Times, respectively. Maine restaurants benefit from the rich abundance of products that are locally grown / raised / caught / produced here. "Local" is the driving force behind so many of them. Great restaurants add to our quality of life, and they also bring money into our state by way of culinary tourism. I urge the committee to support this bill so we can continue to be elevated by our beloved Maine-made spirits!