



## Massachusetts Package Stores Association, Inc.

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Cumberland Farms Fails to Proceed with Unlimited Licenses Ballot Question

Westborough, MA ---- VICTORY! On the evening of Friday, June 26, 2020, Cumberland Farms announced that it was ending its disruptive campaign aimed at creating unlimited alcohol beverages licenses for off premises retail. The final straw for Cumberland Farms was their failure at securing the required 13,347 signatures necessary for certification onto the November ballot.

MPSA has stated from the start that this Frankenstein-like ballot question was all about using the ballot initiative process to secure marketplace control by large corporate interests through the complete deregulation of alcohol licenses. Furthermore, the Cumberland Farms ballot question was a hidden attack to undermine the regulatory system for alcohol retail in Massachusetts. Cumberland Farms, the group behind the “Expanded Availability of Alcohol Beverage Licenses” ballot question, is owned by E.G. Group, who controls a 7000-store network that is based in England. MPSA stood up to Cumberland Farms and their allies on behalf of mom and pop brick and mortar retail across the state. It was truly a David v. Goliath match up.

“Even the SJC in their decision to uphold the AG’s original certification recognized that the general purpose of the ballot question had nothing to do with creating a new type of beer and wine license for food stores,” explains Rob Mellion, Executive Director to the Massachusetts Package Stores Association. “To the contrary the general purpose stated by both the SJC and the AG was the deregulation of alcohol licenses in the state. Cumberland Farms misled from the start by not being open about already having 7 licenses. These caps on licenses are in place to protect public safety from oversaturating communities with liquor stores. They also prevent marketplace control in any city or town and across the state. Marketplace is exactly what Cumberland Farms was seeking to achieve.”

Ryan Maloney, owner of Julio’s Liquors, and President of the MPSA Board of Directors, is very happy with the outcome. “Locally owned stores across the state are breathing a genuine sigh of relief in learning that Cumberland Farms and their corporate allies were unable to meet the final signature threshold. We were prepared to go all the way in November because this was a fight for the survival of independently owned small businesses like my own store.”

“Cumberland Farms is clearly unashamed at the disruption and harm they caused. In their release on Friday night, they ended by putting us on notice with a threat to repeat the ballot question in 2022,” states Rob Mellion. “This is concerning because it clearly shows a flaw in the ballot initiative process. When Massachusetts adopted the ballot initiative process, the constitutional amendment allowing for popular initiatives contained safeguards to prevent corporate special interests like Cumberland Farms from securing advantageous changes to state law by misleading the public. Cumberland Farms clearly has the means to pierce these public safeguards. If anything was learned, it was that something needs to be done to prevent large corporate interests from abusing the ballot initiative process. In the meantime, local retailers of beer, wine and spirits can rightfully focus on rebuilding the state economy, safeguarding against illegal sales to minors and safely serving customers. To that end, MPSA asks Massachusetts residents to please shop locally for beer, wine and spirits.”

*The Massachusetts Package Stores Association (MPSA) is a non-profit trade organization representing the interests of the thousands of independently owned retail liquor stores across Massachusetts. The Board of Directors of MPSA are primarily comprised of owner/operators of retail stores of beer, wine and spirits. Contact MPSA with any questions at (800) 322-1383, or email [info@masspack.org](mailto:info@masspack.org). Visit the MPSA website at: [www.masspack.org](http://www.masspack.org)*