

Good Morning Councilmember Graham, thank you for holding this hearing today and for all of your efforts with ABRA. My name is Lynne Breaux and I am the President of the Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington (RAMW). RAMW is a trade association representing over 600 restaurants and food service industry professionals in DC and in Northern Virginia. In 2005, DC restaurants generated over \$233 million in sales tax alone and employed over 36,000 restaurant workers. According to Mayor Williams, 15% of the city's budget is directly attributed to the restaurant industry. Restaurants have contributed greatly to the current resurgence in the District through raising the reputation of DC as a fine dining tourist destination and contributions to the city's coffers. Our world-class restaurants and our high profile chefs have been featured on the "*Food Networks' Iron Chef*", the cover of *Bon Appetit* and numerous other national and international publications and television shows. DC dining is on a roll and we wish to keep it that way.

The food and beverage industry in 2004 had a direct fiscal impact of over \$680 Million in the District.¹ Travel and tourism has helped to reenergize Washington, DC. One only has to stroll down F St. and pass the Verizon Center or catch a show and dinner in the U St. corridor to see how strong a resurgence our city is experiencing. We want to keep people coming into our city and spending money.

RAMW lauds ABRA for streamlining the ABC license renewal process along with the second and third year payment plan. And as always, RAMW encourages our members to be in compliance with all laws. RAMW believes that the budget proposal for ABRA that

¹ The Economic Impact of Travel & Tourism in Washington, DC, Global Insight

is before you should be approved. ABRA needs these funds to successfully enforce ABC compliance throughout the District of Columbia, aid in ABC education, and as mentioned helping to continue to streamline ABC license renewal.

Thank you for your time and attention to this budget process.