



Advocating for NYS Package Stores Since 1942  
*Your Advocate and Your Watchdog!*

**Contact: Butler Associates**

Christopher Collora

(646) 213-1387/[ccollora@butlerassociates.com](mailto:ccollora@butlerassociates.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Local Mom & Pop Merchants Band Together to Oppose Goliath 30,000 Square Foot Liquor Store from Coming to Queens**

Local mom & pop small merchants in Queens, many of whom are immigrant families, are rallying to urge local legislators and the New York State Liquor Authority (SLA) to reject a massive national chain liquor store from being dropped into the community, threatening the viability of hundreds of long-established local businesses throughout Queens and the surrounding counties.

The proposed 30,000-square-foot Total Wine & More mega store, applying for a liquor license as MCT Fine Wine & Spirits, LLC, at 30-02 Whitestone Expressway in College Point, is expected to threaten thousands of jobs, crushing established family-owned community “mom and pop” liquor stores by using profits from their 200 other stores across the nation, to be able to afford to lose money in this one location to gain a controlling market share.

Total Wine, based in Maryland, which owns nearly 200 stores in 23 states nationwide and reports a \$3 Billion annual revenue, has a history of engaging in aggressive and litigious business practices that some say have been successful in driving local retailers to the brink of bankruptcy and even out of business by undercutting prices, destabilizing the market and affecting all three tiers of the industry: retailers, producers and distributors, threatening jobs in each.

The multi-billion-dollar company is owned and controlled by Maryland Congressman David Trone and his brother Robert Trone.

Queens is home to over 350 package stores, 2,500 total in downstate New York, employing thousands, including store employees, distributors, union and non-union sales representatives and union and non-union truck drivers.

Many across the industry believe residents are already well-served by the existing liquor stores scattered across local neighborhoods. A new mega liquor store would not increase liquor sales in Queens but instead siphon from existing stores and would eventually wipe out local liquor stores.

The new proposed College Point location is also only two miles from the Bronx, nine miles from Brooklyn and eleven miles from the Nassau County border, further raising concerns of more than just local Queens merchants.

In 2017 Total Wine opened a store in Westbury, Long Island, and neighboring liquor stores have reported drops in sales of 40% to 60%. This significant loss of business is not only felt by the store owner but by the suppliers, vendors, salespeople and hundreds of workers that support businesses. Total Wine does not allow industry sales representatives in any of its stores.

According to the non-profit Metropolitan Package Store Association ([MetroPSA](#)), which advocates for these local merchants, Total Wine is operating as a national chain similar to Walmart, Home Depot and Walgreens. Many believe their goal is to build a state-wide chain in New York, exactly as they have in other states.

“This is a classic ‘David vs. Goliath’ battle,” said **Michael Correra**, Executive Director of the non-profit MetroPSA. “No one likes seeing powerful bullies moving into their neighborhood to radically change the landscape, disrupting established merchants that won’t be able to survive or continue to pay their rent. The intention of state liquor laws is that a local seller of wines and liquor be a single owner who knows their community and spends time there. Local, family-owned small businesses are always the lifeblood of our communities and our local economy, and the last thing New York City needs are more big box stores that result in more vacant neighborhood storefronts.”

New York State licensing laws governing wine and liquor retailers, passed after the repeal of Prohibition in the 1930’s, mandate that the industry operate under a unique set of rules. Owners are prohibited from operating more than one store in New York State.

MetroPSA argues that Total Wine’s WalMart-sized stores represent an economic model based on disrupting community merchants, oversaturating the liquor market, and putting existing local liquor stores out of business.

Total Wine has also demonstrated a pattern of litigious activity across multiple states, where it has sued to get laws changed, including in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and a pending case in New York.

A representative of the family that controls the corporation even said publicly at a New York State Liquor Authority meeting that a Total megastore is expected to draw consumers from a 50-mile radius, confirming the fears of local merchants throughout the city and surrounding areas.

###