

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2013 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 459

(Delegate Otto)

Economic Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Somerset County - Alcoholic Beverages - Beer and Wine Tasting License

This bill authorizes the Somerset County Board of License Commissioners to issue a beer and wine tasting (BWT) alcoholic beverages license to a holder of a beer, wine, and liquor license or a beer and wine license. A BWT license allows the licensee to provide free tastings of beer or wine, except during a festival event. The Somerset County Board of License Commissioners must regulate the quantity of beer or wine served to individuals and the number of bottles of beer or wine from which it is being served. The board is required to adopt implementary regulations. A BWT license has a one-time \$100 issuing fee and a \$150 annual fee. The bill also eliminates the wine tasting (WT) license.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2013.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Somerset County alcoholic beverages license fee revenues increase minimally beginning in FY 2014 from issuance of BWT licenses. Any enforcement activities can be handled with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal. Holders of a beer, wine, and liquor license or beer and wine license in Somerset County may realize increased sales resulting from the use of the BWT license, but since Class A beer and wine (off-sale) license holders can already obtain a WT license, the potential increase of sales from beer is negligible.

Analysis

Current Law: The Somerset County Board of License Commissioners may issue a WT license to the holder of a Class A beer and wine (off-sale) license for \$150 per year. A WT licensee may hold wine tasting events on up to 15 days during the year, provided that the Somerset County Board of License Commissioners is notified in writing at least 5 days in advance of each wine tasting day. At an event, the WT licensee may open no more than six bottles of wine at any one time and may allow customers to sample one ounce of each brand. The WT license is for on-premises consumption only, and wine sampling may not be conducted from a drive-through window.

Background: In 2012, the Somerset County Board of License Commissioners issued 12 beer and wine licenses; 20 beer, wine, and liquor licenses; and 1 WT license.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None designated; however, SB 351 (Senator Mathias - Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs) is identical.

Information Source(s): Somerset County, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 7, 2013
mc/hlb

Analysis by: Heather N. Ruby

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510