

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 252
Economic Matters

(Delegate Barkley)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Alcoholic Beverages - Liquor and Wine

This bill clarifies that a beer and wine license holder in Baltimore, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Kent, Montgomery, Queen Anne’s, St. Mary’s, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester counties may not sell wine that contains more than 22% alcohol by volume. The bill also defines “liquor” to have the same meaning as “distilled spirits.”

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: None. The bill is clarifying in nature and does not affect local finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law/Background: “Beer” means a brewed alcoholic beverage that meets specified alcohol by volume requirements and includes ale, porter, stout, and specified hard ciders. “Wine” means a fermented beverage and includes light wine, sparkling wine that is naturally or artificially carbonated, and fortified wine. Generally, “light wine” means a wine that contains no more than 15.5% alcohol by volume. “Distilled spirits” means a distilled alcoholic beverage and includes alcohol, brandy, cordials, gin, liqueur, rum, vodka, whiskey, and solutions or mixtures of distilled spirits except fortified wines.

Chapter 41 of 2016 revised, restated, and recodified the laws of the State that relate to alcoholic beverages. During the code revision process, every effort is made to ensure that a proposed revision conforms as nearly as possible to the intent of the General Assembly, and all these revisions are highlighted in the revisor's notes.

The revisor's note for § 13-201 of the Alcoholic Beverages Article states that during the revision process, references to "wine" were substituted to "light wine" in some cases to reflect whether each county allowed license holders to sell wine with a maximum alcohol content of 15.5% (light wine) or 22% (wine). The various provisions that redefined light wine to be a fermented beverage containing no more than 22% alcohol by volume were then removed. The bill re-codifies the 22% limit in the affected counties.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Comptroller's Office; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 14, 2017
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