

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 195 (Howard County Delegation)
Economic Matters

Howard County - Alcoholic Beverages (Fines)
Ho. Co. 4-97

This bill increases the fine that the Howard County Board of License Commissioners may impose from \$1,000 to \$2,000. The bill also permits the board to both impose a fine and suspend a license. Currently, the board may only do one or the other, not both.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Indeterminate increase in Howard County revenues. No effect on expenditures.

Small Business Effect: Potential minimal effect on small businesses as discussed below.

Fiscal Analysis

Local Revenues: In fiscal 1996 the Howard County Board of License Commissioners imposed four fines totaling approximately \$2,000. Under the bill, the board may impose a fine up to \$2,000. However, in fiscal 1997 the board has adopted a more aggressive approach to enforcement. The board has already levied 13 fines in six months. As a result, the amount of fines could reach as high as \$8,000 annually due to the doubling of the fines, assuming that the bill's provisions do not deter violations.

Small Business Effect: In 1996 the Howard County Board of License Commissioners issued 170 licenses. Although the number of such licensees that are small businesses (50 or fewer employees) is unknown, it is likely that a vast majority fall into that category. Businesses that comply with the county's alcohol beverage laws will not be impacted by this bill.

However, small businesses that violate the county's alcoholic beverages laws could be impacted by an increase in fines and the suspension of their license.

Information Source(s): Howard County, Department of Fiscal Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 28, 1997

brd

Analysis by: Thomas Himler

Reviewed by: John Rixey

Direct Inquiries to:

John Rixey, Coordinating Analyst

(410) 841-3710

(301) 858-3710