

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Revised

House Bill 548

(Washington County Delegation)

Economic Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

**Washington County - Special Wine Tasting License and Alcohol Awareness
Program**

This bill authorizes the Washington County Board of Liquor License Commissioners to issue a special wine tasting license to the holder of a Class B (on-off sale) beer, wine, and liquor license. The bill also provides that in Washington County an alcoholic beverages licensee or a person who is employed in a supervisory capacity designated by the licensee must be certified by an approved alcohol awareness program and must be present during the hours which alcoholic beverages may be sold. A person certified by an approved alcohol awareness program may be absent from the licensed premises for a bona fide personal or business reason or an emergency if the absence lasts no more than two hours. The licensee is required to keep a log of such absences.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2004.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Washington County revenues would increase by \$200 for each special wine tasting license issued. Any additional monitoring of licensees could be handled with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: The Washington County Board of Liquor License Commissioners is authorized to issue a special wine tasting license to the holder of a Class A (off-sale) beer, wine, and liquor license. The special wine tasting license authorizes the holder to hold 12 events every year. The fee for a special wine tasting license is \$200.

The holder of any class of retail alcoholic beverages license or an employee designated by the licensee must complete training in an approved alcohol awareness program every four years.

In Harford, Howard, Kent, and Montgomery counties the licensee or person employed in a supervisory capacity must be certified by an approved alcohol awareness program and must be present during the hours in which alcohol may be sold. However, in Howard and Kent counties, a person certified by an approved alcohol awareness program may be absent from the licensed premises for a bona fide personal or business reason or an emergency if the absence lasts no more than two hours; the licensee must maintain a log of all absences. Additionally, in Baltimore City, the owner of a bottle club or person employed in a supervisory capacity at a bottle club must be certified by an approved alcohol awareness program and must be present during the hours in which alcohol is served or consumed.

Background: Washington County issued 162 alcoholic beverages licenses in fiscal 2003.

According to the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Division of the Comptroller's Office there were 24 alcohol awareness programs and 275 alcohol awareness instructors approved in fiscal 2003.

Health Communications, Inc., a leading provider of certified instructors for alcohol awareness programs, advises that instructors set their own rates for providing instruction in alcohol awareness. The company further advises that an individual can expect to pay a minimum of \$35 for the program and that a course typically lasts five hours.

Local Fiscal Effect: Washington County advises that approximately 12 hotels in the county that hold a Class B (on-off sale) beer, wine, and liquor license are interested in holding wine tasting events. Accordingly, Washington County revenues would increase by \$2,400 annually.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Washington County, Comptroller's Office, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 3, 2004
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Analysis by: Christopher J. Kelter

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