

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 63

(Delegate Eckardt, *et al.*)

Economic Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental  
Affairs

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Dorchester County - Alcoholic Beverages - Special Class C Licensees -  
Distribution of Wristbands

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This bill requires holders of a special Class C license in Dorchester County to distribute wristbands to each individual 21 years and older at an event for which a license is issued. Only individuals wearing a wristband may be served the alcoholic beverages for which the event is licensed.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2007.

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Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** None. Monitoring and any enforcement actions in Dorchester County could be handled with existing resources.

**Small Business Effect:** Potential minimal.

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Analysis

**Current Law:** A special Class C license entitles a club, society, or association to serve alcoholic beverages at a licensed event for up to seven consecutive days. In Dorchester County, a holder of a special Class C license may cater an event at the place described in the license at a cost of \$15 per day for a special Class C beer license or special Class C

beer or wine license; the cost of a special Class C beer, wine, or liquor license is \$25 per day.

### *Underage Drinking Penalties*

An individual under 21 years old may not have an alcoholic beverage under his/her control unless the individual is an employee of an alcoholic beverage license holder in possession of the beverage in the normal course of the individual's employment. There is no specific prohibition against exhibiting the effects of alcohol consumption.

An individual age 18 to 21 who is cited for possessing an alcoholic beverage is subject to a fine of up to \$500 for a first violation and up to \$1,000 for each subsequent violation upon conviction in District Court. The court may suspend or defer these fines, and an individual who willfully fails to repay these fines may be charged with criminal contempt of court.

An individual under 18 who is cited for possessing an alcoholic beverage is to be tried as a juvenile in the circuit court sitting as the juvenile court. The court may counsel the child and/or the parent or order the child into an alcohol education or rehabilitation program, impose a civil fine of up to \$25 for the first violation and up to \$100 for subsequent violations, or order the child to participate in a supervised work program of up to 20 hours for the first violation and up to 40 hours for subsequent violations.

**Background:** Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol is a community-based program designed to reduce underage access to alcohol. The program, which has been endorsed by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, is structured to engage local retailers and community institutions in reducing underage drinking. The results of the program show that community-level policies, including the use of wristbands to identify individuals of legal drinking age, can affect the number of underage individuals who consume or attempt to purchase alcohol at community events.

According to the Alcohol Epidemiology Program at the University of Minnesota, the cost of wristbands generally ranges from \$28 to \$112 per 1,000. Wristbands are available from multiple vendors in a variety of materials.

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## **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** SB 713 (Senator Colburn) – Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs.

**Information Source(s):** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, University of Minnesota, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 15, 2007  
ncs/hlb

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