

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2018 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 340 (Washington County Senators)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Economic Matters

Washington County - Alcoholic Beverages - Tasting Licenses

This bill authorizes the Washington County Board of License Commissioners to issue existing beer, wine, and liquor tasting licenses to a holder of *any* class of beer, wine, and liquor licenses in Washington County. The bill modifies existing tasting license requirements pertaining to license fees, consumption limits, and time restrictions on tasting events. The annual tasting license fees are (1) \$100 for a 12-day beer tasting license; (2) \$200 for a 24-day beer tasting license; (3) \$200 for a 12-day wine tasting license; and (4) \$400 for a 24-day wine tasting license. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2018.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Minimal increase in revenues to the extent that Washington County receives additional tasting license revenue as a result of the bill. Washington County can handle any enforcement with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Potentially meaningful to the extent that additional licensees take advantage of the tasting licenses.

Analysis

Bill Summary:

Beer Tasting (BT) License: The bill clarifies that a beer tasting license is for *on-premises* consumption of multiple varieties of beer, and specifies that the beer must be from a single brand owner for tasting if the consumer is not charged. A license holder may serve up to

two ounces of a single offering to a single consumer, and the beer tasting event may not last longer than four hours. A license holder must follow the following requirements:

- the license holder must notify the board in writing at least 10 days before a beer tasting event;
- a maximum of four bottles of beer may be open at any one time at a beer tasting event; and
- after a bottle is opened the contents of the bottle may not be mixed with that of any other bottle, and the bottle must be destroyed once empty.

Wine Tasting (WTL) License: The bill authorizes a wine tasting license holder to allow a wholesaler or supplier to present various wines from a single brand owner at a tasting event. A single tasting event may not exceed four hours. A license holder must follow the following requirements:

- a maximum of four bottles may be open at any time at a wine tasting event; and
- after a bottle of wine is opened for a tasting event, the contents of the bottle may not be mixed with that of any other bottle and the bottle must be destroyed once empty.

Liquor Tasting (LTL) License: The bill authorizes a liquor tasting license holder to allow a wholesaler or supplier to present various liquors from a single brand owner. A single tasting event may not exceed four hours, and the bill specifies that a license holder may not serve more than one ounce of a single liquor to a single individual. The bill repeals the prohibition on holding more than one liquor, beer, or wine tasting event on the same day.

Current Law:

Beer Tasting (BT) License: The board may issue a beer tasting license to a holder of a Class A or Class B beer and wine (BW) license or a Class A or Class B beer, wine, and liquor (BWL) license. The license authorizes the holder to allow the consumption of beer for tasting if the consumer is not charged. The board must regulate the:

- quantity of beer to be served to each individual;
- number of bottles or other containers of beer from which this quantity is being served; and
- size of the bottles or other containers.

The annual license fee is \$100.

Wine Tasting (WTL) License: The board may issue a wine tasting license to a holder of a Class A beer, wine, and liquor license. The license authorizes the holder to allow the

on-premises consumption of wine for tasting if the consumer is not charged. The license holder must notify the board in writing at least 10 days before a tasting event, and may not serve more than two ounces of a single wine to a single customer. The license may not be used more than 12 days in a licensing year.

The annual license fee is \$200.

Liquor Tasting (LTL) License: The board may issue a liquor tasting license to a holder of a Class A beer, wine, and liquor license. The license authorizes the holder to allow the on-premises consumption of liquor for tasting if the consumer is not charged. The license holder must notify the board in writing at least 10 days before a tasting event, but the license holder may not hold more than one liquor, beer, or wine tasting event on the same day. A license holder must follow the following requirements:

- an individual may consume liquor covered by the license in a quantity of not more than one-half ounce from each offering of liquor; and four offerings total in one day;
- a maximum of four bottles may be open at any one time at a liquor tasting event; and
- after a bottle of liquor is opened for a tasting event, the contents of the bottle may not be mixed with that of any other bottle, and the bottle must be destroyed when empty.

The license may be used for a maximum of 12 and 24 days in a licensing year.

The annual license fees are \$300 for a 12-tasting license and \$500 for a 24-tasting license.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: HB 1156 (Delegate McKay) - Economic Matters.

Information Source(s): Washington County; Department of Legislative Services

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