

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 656

(Wicomico County Delegation)

Economic Matters

Wicomico County - Alcoholic Beverages Licenses - Athletic and Event Facility License

This bill establishes a Class B (athletic and event facility) beer, wine, and liquor (BWL) license in Wicomico County. The bill authorizes the Wicomico County Board of License Commissioners to issue the license to a facility, as specified. The license authorizes the license holder to sell beer, wine, and liquor from one or more outlets located within the facility, for on-premises consumption. The bill prohibits the board from issuing the license until specified regulations are adopted and are in effect. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Wicomico County license revenues increase to the extent Class B (athletic and event facility) BWL licenses are issued under the bill. Wicomico County can monitor any additional enforcement activity with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The board is authorized to issue a Class B (athletic and event facility) license for use at a facility that has (1) a kitchen for the preparation and management of food service in conjunction with the sale of alcohol and (2) a capacity of at least 500 people.

The board must adopt regulations prohibiting the consumption of alcohol by spectators and other participants in youth events, including youth athletic events. The regulations must

also establish requirements for (1) the dispensing of alcoholic beverages; (2) the number of outlets authorized to dispense alcoholic beverages within a facility; (3) the minimum capital investment in the licensed premises; (4) the hours and days of sale; and (5) the annual license fee.

The bill defines “facility” as (1) an athletic facility; (2) an auditorium; (3) a banquet hall; or (4) a conference center.

Current Law:

Class B-BF (Banquet Facility) BWL License: In Wicomico County, the board is authorized to issue a Class B-BF license to a banquet facility that (1) accommodates the public for banquets, parties, meetings, and similar functions; (2) contains a dining room with adequate facilities for serving full-course meals for at least 100 individuals who are inside the facility or outside on the premises at one seating; and (3) has adequate public bathroom facilities. The license authorizes the license holder to sell at retail beer, wine, and liquor for on premises consumption, as specified. The annual license fee is \$1,500.

Class B-Conference Center License: The board is authorized to issue a Class B-Conference Center license to a conference center that has (1) a minimum capacity of 500 individuals; (2) a kitchen; (3) dining space; and (4) meeting space. The license authorizes the license holder to sell beer, wine, and liquor for on-premises consumption to individuals attending a conference center event. The annual license fee is \$1,500.

Local Fiscal Effect: Wicomico County revenues increase to the extent the board issues Class B (athletic and event facility) BWL licenses. The number of individuals that will obtain a license under the bill is unknown, and the board has not yet established an annual license fee by regulation; therefore, any potential increase in Wicomico County license fee revenues under the bill cannot be reliably estimated. Wicomico County can handle the bill’s requirements with existing resources.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 31, 2025
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