

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 567

Economic Matters

(Dorchester County Delegation)

Finance

Dorchester County - Alcoholic Beverages - Arts Beer and Wine License

This bill establishes an arts beer and wine license in Dorchester County and authorizes the Dorchester County Board of License Commissioners to issue the license to a nonprofit or for-profit retail business, including an art center, art gallery, a museum, or a similar business primarily devoted to art that expresses matters of serious literary, artistic, scientific, or political value that (1) engages in the display and sale or original artwork and (2) is located in an arts and entertainment district. The license holder may sell or serve beer and wine for on-premises consumption Monday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. provided that snacks are also served. The board cannot issue the license to a business that displays and sells commercially prepared or mass-produced artistic products, and the license cannot be transferred to another location. The annual license fee is \$250. The bill also authorizes the board to issue an arts beer and wine license to an establishment within 300 feet of a place of worship or school if the board receives written consent for the issuance of the license from each place of worship or school. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Dorchester County revenues increase, beginning in FY 2026, to the extent that arts beer and wine licenses are issued under the bill. Dorchester County can handle any additional enforcement activity with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Minimal overall, but potentially meaningful for a nonprofit or retail business that is able to sell beer and wine under the bill.

Analysis

Current Law: Maryland's 23 counties, Baltimore City, and the City of Annapolis all have boards of license commissioners that issue and enforce retail alcoholic beverages licenses in their jurisdictions. Within each jurisdiction, the most common types of retail licenses are Class A, Class B, Class C, and Class D licenses. Each license authorizes the sale of alcoholic beverages in a different manner and may authorize the sale of alcohol for on-premises consumption. For example, Class A licenses generally only allow the sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption, and Class B licenses are generally issued to restaurants and allow the sale of alcoholic beverages with food.

Each local jurisdiction has its own regulatory processes and requirements in place for who can apply for and obtain a license and how many licenses, in total, may be issued for use in the jurisdiction.

In Dorchester County, the board is prohibited from issuing a new license for an establishment that is within 300 feet in a direct line of a place of worship or a public or nonpublic kindergarten, elementary, or secondary school except for (1) a license for a premises that was licensed on October 1, 1996; (2) a class B beer, wine, and liquor license for a premises in Cambridge, Secretary, or Hurlock; or (3) a temporary license.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: SB 800 (Dorchester County Senators) - Finance.

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

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 12, 2025
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Analysis by: Andrew Stover

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