



OFFICE OF COUNCILMAN JOSH HASTINGS

Wicomico County Council, District 4
125 N. Division St., Room 302
Salisbury, MD 21801

Date: February 14, 2020
Committee: House Economic Matters - Alcoholic Beverages Subcommittee
Bill #: **HB 1319 – City of Salisbury – Alcoholic Beverages – Local Regulation and Control**
Position: Support

Dear Chairman Branch & Alcohol Subcommittee Members:

As the Wicomico County Councilman who represents the City of Salisbury on the Council, I rise in full support of **HB 1319 – City of Salisbury – Alcoholic Beverages – Local Regulation and Control**, to establish a local Board of Liquor Licensing for the City of Salisbury. Current law allows for a system, under the Wicomico Board of License Commissioners, that is outdated, unresponsive, and with little accountability to Delmarva's most important municipality.

House Bill 1319 would establish a local Board of Liquor Licensing that would be responsive to the needs of a dynamic and vastly growing city. In addition to hosting a nationally recognized zoo, major university, and national festivals like the National Folk Festival, Salisbury currently boasts the 2nd largest port and 2nd largest airport in the State of Maryland. Salisbury is becoming a more diverse, youthful, and well-educated City – with dozens of major development projects underway in the downtown alone.

The vast growth that Salisbury has witnessed has also included a significant and calculated investment in safety. Salisbury has invested in greater walkability, new infrastructure, community outreach, and enhanced community policing. This culture of safety permeates City government and has led to outside groups and organizations choosing Salisbury to host numerous regional and national events.

Wicomico County is currently one of four jurisdictions in the State with a wholesale monopoly of certain alcoholic beverages. Multiple constituents have personally reached out to me to complain of corruption, unresponsiveness, and inefficiencies in the current county system. It's time that Maryland's fastest growing municipality have greater control over how it handles alcohol consumption and distribution.

This bill will not have a significant impact on Wicomico County and will only increase efficiency in local government. If I can provide further information or support, please don't hesitate to reach out at jhastings@wicomicocounty.org or 410-251-5268. I respectfully urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Councilman Josh Hastings
Wicomico County Council, D. 4