



**House Ways & Means Committee
February 11, 2021**

**House Bill 796
Sales and Use Tax – Alcoholic Beverages – Rate Reduction**

Oppose

NCADD-Maryland strongly opposes House Bill 796. After many years of advocating for an increase in the alcoholic beverage tax, the General Assembly agreed in 2011 that the benefits to an increase in the sales tax rate for alcohol were well worth supporting that measure. We thank those of you here on this committee who supported those efforts.

Since that tax was enacted, there have been a number of benefits realized. There is significant research demonstrating the benefits have included reductions in underage drinking, binge drinking, driving under the influence, and sexually transmitted infections.ⁱ Research on the impact of the tax increase continues and we expect to find more public health and economic benefits in the future.

The decision 10 years ago to increase the sales tax on alcoholic beverages was a good public health decision. We hope the General Assembly will continue to address issues around substance use and prevention from a well-researched, public health perspective.

We urge an unfavorable report on HB 796.

The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.

ⁱ <https://abell.org/publications/public-health-policy-maryland>