



# Maryland Department of

*Office of the Secretary*

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Agriculture | *Maryland's Leading  
Industry*

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## Maryland Department of Agriculture

### Legislative Comment

**Date: February 20, 2023**

**BILL NUMBER:** HB 987

**SHORT TITLE:** ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES- USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES  
FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

**MDA POSITION:** SUPPORT

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The University of Maryland was approved to offer a Fermentation Science major that explores the application of fundamentals to understand fermentation for food and beverages.

The Fermentation Science major is a four-year course of study in which the first two years are dominated by foundational science and general education courses. Components of several of these fermentation science courses involve the students in the study, evaluation and production of alcoholic beverages. Specifically:

1. “Viticulture and Enology” – A scientific introduction to viticulture (grape-growing) and enology (winemaking).
2. “Brewing and Distilling” – A scientific introduction to beer production and distillation of spirits, and brewery and distillery operations.
3. “Fermentation Science Laboratory” – An introduction to the microbiology and biochemistry of fermentation and the biotechnology involved in the production of fermented foods, beverages, pharmaceuticals and biofuels.
4. “Sensory Analysis Laboratory” – Development of students’ sensory evaluation skills (taste, smell, feel, etc.) and understanding the science behind food sensory perception.
5. “Experiential Learning” – Opportunities for industry-embedded internships.

Existing Maryland law prohibits students who are less than 21 years of age from enrolling in courses in which the students may have access to alcoholic beverages as part of the course instruction. Passage of this legislation would allow students to enroll in essential fermentation science courses that may provide limited access to alcoholic beverages prior to reaching 21 years of age. The student would be permitted limited access to alcoholic beverages for study, production, evaluation and tasting, but would not be permitted to consume or swallow any of the beverages. MDA supports HB 987 and thanks you for your consideration of a favorable report.

If you have additional questions, please contact Steve Connelly, Deputy Secretary, at [steve.connelly@maryland.gov](mailto:steve.connelly@maryland.gov) or (410) 841-5881.