



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 23, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller, Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill 735 – Harford County - Alcoholic Beverages - Class L License – Letter of Information with Amendments

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of information with amendments for Senate Bill (SB) 735 – Harford County - Alcoholic Beverages - Class L License. This bill establishes in Harford County a new type of license for facilities to sell or serve beer and wine for on-premises consumption. The bill stipulates that, while not requiring food, prepackaged snacks must be sold or served whenever alcohol is sold.

MDH notes that the terms “food” and “prepackaged snacks” are not defined, and license holders may unwittingly serve potentially hazardous foods without a food service facility license. Serving any foods that require temperature control for safety requires a food service facility license under Title 21 of the Health General Article, which ensures a facility takes proper sanitation and safety measures. To ensure that license holders do not endanger their patrons with food-related illnesses, MDH would appreciate the Committee’s consideration of the attached amendments. While the context of these proposed amendments is familiar to existing businesses (particularly those in the food industry), the amendments will further ensure that new businesses and new alcohol license applicants who do not already serve food are equally as aware of the food service facility requirements as the long-standing members of the business community.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H. Secretary

Attachment: Amendment to Senate Bill 735

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 623
(First Reading File Bill)

On page 2, starting with “NOT” on line 22 through line 23, inclusive. Substitute: “**REQUIRED TO OFFER OR SELL EITHER:**

(1) FOOD AS A LICENSED FOOD SERVICE FACILITY IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 21-305 OF THE HEALTH GENERAL ARTICLE; OR

(2) PREPACKAGED FOODS THAT DO NOT REQUIRE TEMPERATURE CONTROL FOR FOOD SAFETY.”