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## *The Maryland House of Delegates* ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### **HB770 Baltimore County – Alcoholic Beverages – Sale or Delivery for Off-Premises Consumption – February 17, 2025**

#### **WHAT DOES THIS BILL DO?**

This bill enables the purchase of certain alcoholic beverages for takeout alongside prepared meals, providing a significant benefit to both business owners and customers. For example, a family in Baltimore County can conveniently pick up their takeout dinner on a Friday night while the parents also enjoy the option of adding a to-go cocktail. During the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants and customers successfully embraced carryout cocktails without issues. HB 770 seeks to make this convenience permanent, allowing restaurants to continue offering takeout alcoholic beverages under the oversight of the liquor board.

#### **WHAT PROBLEM ARE WE TRYING TO SOLVE?**

In the years since COVID, there has been a massive shift in consumer behavior. Almost every industry has been able and allowed to adapt to this change. Retail stores continued sales on their websites, grocery stores provided delivery services, and nearly any meal you wanted could be delivered to your doorstep. In fact, carryout and delivery revenue from quick-service restaurants nearly doubled from 2019 to 2022. At full-service restaurants, it *more* than doubled. While brick-and-mortar sales suffered, e-commerce skyrocketed.

This imprint has lingered- Americans have grown accustomed to the comforts and convenience of their own homes. This preference affects their decision-making. By the National Restaurant Association's calculations, over 65% of consumers who drink beer, wine, or cocktails will be more likely to choose a restaurant that serves alcohol to go when they are ordering takeout.

This bill includes common sense safeguards. Mixed drinks and cocktails cannot be purchased for off-premise consumption alone, they must accompany prepared food. Sales cannot occur after 11 PM. And, of course, only those 21 and older-with valid identification- can purchase alcohol for off-premise consumption. This bill does not create an at-home alcohol consumption problem- legal adults can freely purchase the alcohol of their choosing at liquor stores. It does not create a risk of driving under the influence of alcohol- consumers can freely purchase alcohol at a restaurant and drive home immediately afterwards. Sealed container requirements also hinder drinking while driving. And standard ID requirements mean that children will not be able to use this change as a loophole for underage drinking.

I urge a favorable report on HB 770. Thank you for your consideration.