



**MARYLAND STATE
LICENSED BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION**

150 E Main Street, Suite 104, Westminster, MD 21157

Senate Finance Committee

February 21, 2025

Senate Bill 542 – *Alcoholic Beverages Industry – Study*

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

The Maryland State Licensed Beverage Association (MSLBA), which consists of approximately 850 Maryland businesses holding alcoholic beverage licenses (restaurants, bars, taverns and package stores), supports with amendment Senate Bill 542.

Senate Bill 542 mandates a study on minority participation in the alcoholic beverages industry be conducted using a consultant to be retained by the Governor's Office of Small, Minority, and Women Business Affairs.

MSLBA supports the study and acknowledges that there is a lack of participation among black-owned businesses in the retail segment of the alcohol industry. There is a tremendous amount of ownership and participation among other minority groups in the retail sector, but it is lacking in this regard. Information gathered through the study may yield information helping to explain this.

Our only issue with Senate Bill 542 is the collection of certain data specified in the bill, and we have spoken with Senator Charles in this regard. We are unclear on whom the information identified on p. 1, starting at line 20 and continuing through p. 2 at line 8, is to be gathered from. Retailers do not know the demographics of the brand owners of many of the products they carry, so it would be difficult if not impossible for them to provide it if requested.

Similarly, on p.3 at line 3, the list of brands sold in the State by each retailer would require significant time from retailers, only to produce information which should be already available from the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Cannabis Commission which tracks all products distributed here. And finally, at line 9, we are unclear what the percentage of retailer revenues for each brand owner is aimed at, and whether that information is to be gathered from retailers or others.

Again, MSLBA supports the intent of the legislation and the goal of greater minority participation but does not believe that all the data specified is needed or is possible to be garnered from retailers.

For more information call:

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