

Takoma Park 2025 - HB 1229 FAV - Alcohol License-H

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Position: FAV



CITY TAKOMA OF PARK MARYLAND

Support House Bill 1229 - Montgomery County - Alcoholic Beverages Licenses - Health and Safety Regulations MC 21-25
Senate Finance Committee
March 26, 2025

The City of Takoma Park supports and urges favorable consideration of House Bill 1229, which is intended to ensure that the Board of License Commissioners for Montgomery County consider the impact of the volume of alcohol-related calls to County's first response for immediate policy or medical assistance in the area surrounding the address of the proposed license.

The City of Takoma Park is a diverse community with residents from around the globe and thriving business districts. Recently, the City has seen an increase in the number of licensed carry-out beer and wine establishments within its Takoma-Langley Crossroads business district. There are six licensed carry-out beer and wine establishments within a quarter mile of the district's center.

The proliferation of this business type has created unintended consequences. There is a constant issue with alcohol bottles and cans that litter the streets. I regularly see individuals that are publicly intoxicated and passed out on sidewalks and grassy areas. And perhaps the most disturbing thing, parents and teachers at a daycare center have reported that they must explain to their children why someone is inebriated because they happen to pass out in front of the school's driveway.

This bill does not fully restrict new alcohol beverage licenses from being issued. The bill requires the board to consider the impact of the density of existing retail establishments on the public health and safety of the community when issuing licenses. Considering the growing substance use issues facing our region and nation, we urge you to support this bill that requires the Board of License Commissioners for Montgomery County to take a data-driven approach and consider the incremental impact of an additional license. We must work together to support businesses while minimizing the societal risks that an oversaturation of a single type of business might pose to a community. We urge a favorable report.

Senate Testimony.HB1229_Delegate Lorig Charkoudian

Uploaded by: Lorig Charkoudian

Position: FAV



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 1229- MONTGOMERY COUNTY - ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES LICENSES - HEALTH AND SAFETY
MC 21-25

TESTIMONY OF DELEGATE LORIG CHARKOUDIAN
MARCH 26TH, 2025

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Finance Committee,

There is a clear correlation between alcohol outlet density and the well being of a community that should be taken into account when approving new alcohol establishments. According to the CDC, about 178,000 people in the US died from excessive drinking each year in 2020 and 2021, which is an increase from 2016-2017 where there were 138,000 deaths annually¹. A study on Baltimore City found that if alcohol outlet density was decreased by 1 quintile, it would result in 51 less homicides a year, 764 less disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), and \$63.7 million less in victim and criminal justice system costs².

As the statute currently stands, the boards who approve licenses for new alcohol outlets do not need to consider the cumulative impact a new outlet would have on the health & safety of a community. This is a gap in the process that MC 21-25 seeks to remedy. The overall intent is to ensure the boards look at the bigger picture when making these decisions and consider public input from the affected community. Please note that this requirement would not affect any already approved licenses, it would simply require increased consideration for new licenses.

This bill will:

Require the Board to consider the density of existing retail establishments licensed in the County to sell alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption, and the direct and indirect consequences that this pre-existing density has on the public health and safety of the community, **before** deciding whether to approve a new application and issue a new license permitting the sale of alcoholic beverages for off premises consumption.

Therefore, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 1229.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/facts-stats/index.html>

² Trangenstein PJ, Eck RH, Lu Y, Webster D, Jennings JM, Latkin C, Milam AJ, Furr-Holden D, Jernigan DH. The Violence Prevention Potential of Reducing Alcohol Outlet Access in Baltimore, Maryland. J Stud Alcohol Drugs. 2020 Jan;81(1):24-33. doi: 10.15288/jsad.2020.81.24. PMID: 32048598; PMCID: PMC7024813. [link](#)

HB 1229 - MoCo_Wenger_FAV (GA 25) (Senate).pdf

Uploaded by: Melanie Wenger

Position: FAV



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

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HB 1229

DATE: March 26, 2025

SPONSOR: Montgomery County Delegation

ASSIGNED TO: Finance

CONTACT PERSON: Melanie Wenger (melanie.wenger@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: Support

Montgomery County – Alcoholic Beverages Licenses – Health and Safety Regulations MC 21-25

Under current State law, all local licensing boards are required to consider the impact of the license for which application is made on the health, safety, and welfare of the community before a license may be issued or denied.

Under House Bill 1229, an additional specific condition is placed on the Montgomery County Board of Licensing Commissioners: *before deciding whether to approve an application and issue a new license permitting the sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption, the board shall consider the impact of the density of existing retail establishments licensed in the county to sell alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption on the public health and safety of the community.*

Montgomery County supports the bill.

HB 1229 -MoCo BLC-Oppose-Senate Finance.pdf

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Position: UNF

Marc Elrich
County Executive



BOARD OF LICENSE COMMISSIONERS

March 26, 2025

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee

FROM: Man Cho
Chair, Board of License Commissioners for Montgomery County

RE: House Bill 1229, *Montgomery County - Alcoholic Beverages Licenses - Health and Safety Regulations MC 21-25*

Oppose

I am writing to express the Board of License Commissioners for Montgomery County's opposition to House Bill 1229, *Montgomery County - Alcoholic Beverages Licenses - Health and Safety Regulations MC 21-25*.

House Bill 1229, as amended, requires the Board of License Commissioners for Montgomery County to consider the impact of the density of existing retail establishments licensed in the county to sell alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption on the public health and safety of the community before deciding whether to approve an application and issue a new license permitting the sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption.

The Board of License Commissioners for Montgomery County believes that House Bill 1229 is duplicative of current State law, and, therefore, unnecessary. The charge of *all* local licensing boards is to carry out the State's policy to regulate and control alcohol "in the best public interest." Md. Code, Alcoholic Beverages, § 1- 201 (2025). Maryland Code Alcoholic Beverages § 4-210(a) (2025) provides the detail behind that charge, for licensing decisions.

Specifically:

(a) Before deciding whether to approve an application and issue a license, a local licensing board shall consider:

(1) the public need and desire for the license;

- (2) the number and location of existing license holders;
- (3) the potential effect on existing license holders of the license for which application is made;
- (4) the potential commonality or uniqueness of the services and products to be offered by the business of the applicant;
- (5) *the impact of the license for which application is made on the health, safety, and welfare of the community, including issues relating to crime, traffic, parking, or convenience;* and
- (6) any other factor that the local licensing board considers necessary.

As a Board, sitting in the capacity as a quasi-judicial entity, we take our charge very seriously. The feedback gathered from the public hearings that are held for each license application is never discounted. Public input is welcome and critical to our decision-making process. We are also keenly aware that that our decisions can be appealed to the circuit court and must be defensible.

Our last concern relates to the inclusion of additional criteria that is not well-defined. Therefore, the language would be subject to interpretation by the Board, and by those who may want to challenge a Board decision on that basis.

Additionally, at the request of the sponsor, the Board will be enhancing its routine training programs, to include sessions with public health professionals about the impacts of alcohol outlet density on the public health and safety of the community.

For these reasons, as you consider whether to advance this bill, we hope you will take seriously our views, particularly the redundancy and lack of clarity that House Bill 1229 brings to the well-established statutory requirements that all boards must consider when issuing a license to sell alcohol.

cc: Members of the Finance Committee