

KATHY SZELIGA
Legislative District 7A
Baltimore County

Health and Government
Operations Committee

Government Operations and
Health Facilities Subcommittee

Insurance and Pharmaceuticals
Subcommittee

Rules and Executive
Nominations Committee



Annapolis Office
The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 322
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3698 · 301-858-3698
800-492-7122 Ext. 3698
Fax 410-841-3023 · 301-858-3023
Kathy.Szeliga@house.state.md.us

The Maryland House of Delegates
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**HB121 Baltimore County – Alcoholic Beverages –
Sale for Off-Premises Consumption**

What Does This Bill Do?

This bill authorizes restaurants to sell certain alcoholic beverages for takeout when purchased in conjunction with prepared meals, creating a practical benefit for both consumers and small businesses. For example, a family in Baltimore County could pick up takeout dinner on a Friday evening, while parents also have the option to include a to-go cocktail or beverage with their meal.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants and customers successfully utilized carryout alcoholic beverages without public safety concerns. HB 121 seeks to make this proven and popular option permanent, allowing restaurants to continue offering takeout alcohol under the existing oversight and regulation of the local liquor boards.

What Problem Are We Trying to Solve?

COVID permanently changed how consumers interact with businesses, and nearly every industry has adjusted accordingly. In restaurants, off-premises dining is no longer the exception—it is the norm. Full-service off-premises traffic rose from roughly 19 percent in 2019 to 30 percent in 2024.

Despite this shift, Baltimore County restaurants are limited in how they can respond to consumer preferences, leaving them at a disadvantage in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

HB 121 includes clear, common-sense safeguards to protect public safety. Alcoholic beverages may not be sold for off-premises consumption unless they are purchased with prepared food. Sales are prohibited after 11:00 p.m. Only individuals 21 years of age or older, with valid identification, may purchase alcohol. Sealed container requirements further prevent consumption while driving.

This bill does not create new risks related to alcohol consumption. Legal adults can already purchase alcohol freely at liquor stores or consume alcohol at restaurants before driving home. HB 121 simply provides a regulated, limited option that has already proven safe in practice.

HB 121 modernizes Baltimore County's alcohol laws to reflect current consumer behavior, supports local restaurants, and maintains strong safeguards to protect the public. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB 121.