



WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Chair Melissa Wells
Government, Labor and Election Committee
145 Lowe House Office Building
142 Lowe House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Wicomico County — Class A Beer, Wine, and Liquor License — Alterations
Letter of Support — HB1498

Dear Chair Wells and Committee Members:

We are writing to express our strong support for HB 1498, entitled “Wicomico County — Class A Beer, Wine, and Liquor License — Alterations.”

The primary purpose of this legislation is to remove the existing requirement that a business must first operate as a restaurant (Class B license holder) in order to qualify for a Class A beer, wine, and liquor license. Beginning July 1, 2026, new Class A licenses would no longer be contingent upon restaurant operations. This change represents a practical and forward-looking modernization of the current licensing structure.

Importantly, the bill safeguards businesses that currently hold Class A licenses by allowing them to continue renewing their licenses without disruption. The legislation also establishes reasonable parameters by prohibiting the issuance of a Class A license to establishments with retail floor space exceeding 3,500 square feet. Additionally, it limits the total number of Class A licenses in Wicomico County to three—one per county councilmanic district—ensuring equitable geographic distribution and maintaining local balance.

The County Executive respectfully requests one technical amendment to clarify the bill’s intent. Specifically, line 5 on page 3 should be amended to state that a license holder may purchase liquor for retail sale from either a county dispensary or a wholesaler. This clarification will ensure consistency in application and avoid ambiguity in procurement procedures.

The Wicomico County Executive believes HB1498 provides a clear, structured, and fair approach to modernizing the county's alcohol licensing framework while preserving appropriate safeguards and local oversight. We respectfully request your favorable consideration of HB1498, with the requested technical amendment, during the 2026 Legislative Session.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND



Julie M. Giordano
County Executive