

HOUSE BILL 736

Q7

6lr2380

By: **Delegate Ebersole**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2026

Assigned to: Ways and Means

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Alcoholic Beverage Tax – Ready-to-Drink Cocktails**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the alcoholic beverage tax rates for ready-to-drink
4 cocktails; and generally relating to alcoholic beverage taxes.

5 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
6 Article – Tax – General
7 Section 5–101(a) and (g)
8 Annotated Code of Maryland
9 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

10 BY adding to
11 Article – Tax – General
12 Section 5–101(k)
13 Annotated Code of Maryland
14 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

15 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
16 Article – Tax – General
17 Section 5–101(k) through (n) and 5–105
18 Annotated Code of Maryland
19 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

20 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
21 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

22 **Article – Tax – General**

23 5–101.

24 (a) In this title the following words have the meanings indicated.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(g) (1) “Distilled spirits” means a distilled alcoholic beverage.

(2) “Distilled spirits” includes:

(i) alcohol;

(ii) brandy;

(iii) cordials;

(iv) gin;

(v) liqueur;

(vi) rum;

(vii) vodka;

(viii) whiskey; and

(ix) solutions or mixtures of distilled spirits except fortified wines.

(K) “READY-TO-DRINK COCKTAIL” MEANS A BEVERAGE THAT:

(1) CONTAINS DISTILLED SPIRITS MIXED WITH NONALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND MAY CONTAIN WINE;

(2) IS 12% OR LESS ALCOHOL BY VOLUME; AND

(3) IS CONTAINED IN ORIGINAL PACKAGING CONSISTING OF A CONTAINER THAT IS NOT MORE THAN 16 OUNCES.

[(k)] (L) “Resident dealer” means a person who is required to obtain a resident dealer’s permit under § 2–125 of the Alcoholic Beverages and Cannabis Article.

[(l)] (M) (1) “Retail dealer” means a person who buys an alcoholic beverage for sale to a consumer.

(2) “Retail dealer” includes a county department of liquor control, a liquor control board, or the Alcohol Beverage Services for Montgomery County that operates a dispensary.

[(m)] (N) (1) “Wholesaler” means a person who buys or imports an alcoholic beverage for sale to another person for resale.

(2) “Wholesaler” includes a county department of liquor control, a liquor control board, or the Alcohol Beverage Services for Montgomery County that operates a wholesale dispensary.

~~[(n)]~~ (O) (1) “Wine” means a fermented alcoholic beverage.

(2) “Wine” includes:

(i) carbonated, flavored, imitation, sparkling, or still wine;

(ii) champagne;

(iii) cider;

(iv) fortified wine;

(v) perry;

(vi) sake; and

(vii) vermouth.

5–105.

(a) (1) Except as provided in **PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION AND** subsection (d) of this section, the alcoholic beverage tax rate for distilled spirits is:

~~[(1)]~~ (I) \$1.50 for each gallon or 39.63 cents for each liter; and

~~[(2)]~~ (II) if distilled spirits contain a percentage of alcohol greater than 100 proof, an additional tax, for each 1 proof over 100 proof, of 1.5 cents for each gallon or 0.3963 cents for each liter.

(2) THE ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE TAX RATE FOR READY-TO-DRINK COCKTAILS IS 60 CENTS FOR EACH GALLON OR 15.85 CENTS FOR EACH LITER.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section, the alcoholic beverage tax rate for wine is 40 cents for each gallon or 10.57 cents for each liter.

(c) Except as provided in subsection (d) of this section, the alcoholic beverage tax rate on beer and mead is 9 cents for each gallon or 2.3778 cents for each liter.

(d) The tax imposed under § 5–102(b) of this subtitle shall equal the amount that the discriminating jurisdiction charges a Maryland licensee or permit holder.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July

1 1, 2026.