

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

House Bill 1238
Economic Matters

(Delegate Otto, *et al.*)

Finance

Somerset County - Alcoholic Beverages - Liquor Tasting License

This bill establishes a liquor tasting license in Somerset County and authorizes the Somerset County Board of License Commissioners to issue the license to the holder of a Class A beer, wine, and liquor (BWL) license. The license authorizes the holder to allow the consumption of liquor for tasting if (1) the license holder is authorized to sell the liquor, and (2) the consumer is not charged for the liquor. An individual may consume liquor at a liquor tasting in a quantity of up to one-half ounce from each offering of liquor, and five offerings in one day. In addition to the cost of the Class A BWL license, the liquor tasting license fees are (1) for a license that is effective for only one day in a licensing period, \$20; (2) for a license that is effective for any 26 days in a licensing period, \$200; (3) for a license that is effective for any 52 days in a licensing period, \$300; (4) for a license that is effective for any 104 days in a licensing period, \$400. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Somerset County revenues increase to the extent liquor tasting licenses are issued under the bill. The county can handle any additional enforcement activity with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: The board is authorized to issue a Class A BWL license, and the license authorizes the license holder to sell beer, wine, and liquor at retail to consumers at the place described in the license. The license may not be issued for a premises having a direct or indirect connection with a drug or pharmaceutical dispensing business or other business establishment of a type commonly known as a drugstore. The license holder must sell the beer, wine, and liquor in a sealed package or container, and the package or container may not be opened, and its contents may not be consumed on the premises where the alcohol was sold. The annual fee is \$5,000. The holder of a Class A BWL license may sell beer, wine, and liquor (1) on Monday through Saturday, from 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. the following day, and (2) on Sunday, from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m. the following day.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 13, 2025
km/tso Third Reader - March 18, 2025

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