

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 5689

As Reported By House Committee On:
Commerce & Labor

Title: An act relating to licenses to sell liquor in motels.

Brief Description: Establishing a license to sell liquor in motels.

Sponsors: Senators Moore, West, Vognild and McCaslin.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Commerce & Labor, April 2, 1993, DP.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 8 members:
Representatives Heavey, Chair; Lisk, Ranking Minority
Member; Chandler, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Conway;
Horn; King; Springer; and Veloria.

Staff: Jim Kelley (786-7166).

Background: Hotels and clubs with class H liquor licenses may sell liquor by the bottle to registered guests for consumption in guest rooms, hospitality rooms, or at banquets. Guests may remove from the premises any unused portion of purchased liquor in its original container. A hotel is required to have a full service dining room in order to hold a class H liquor license.

Motels that do not hold a class H liquor license are not authorized to sell individual bottles of liquor to guests.

Summary of Bill: A new class M liquor license is established. The license may be issued to a motel, which is defined as a facility offering three or more self-contained units to travelers and transient guests. The license must not be issued to a motel offering rooms on an hourly basis. The license authorizes the motel to sell individual bottles of spirits not to exceed 50 milliliters, individual bottles of wine not to exceed 187 milliliters, and individual cans and bottles of beer not to exceed 12 ounces to registered guests for consumption in guest rooms.

Containers of alcohol must be kept in locked honor bars and the bars are required to have snack foods. A licensee may not have honor bars in more than one-half of its guest rooms. The licensee must require proof of age from guests requesting the use of an honor bar. The guest must also sign an affidavit verifying that no one under 21 years of age will have access to the alcohol.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This is the same bill that passed the Legislature but was vetoed by Governor Gardner. The bill has built in protections that are not required of class H licensees. There would not be a large influx of new licensees. This would help motels compete with hotels. There is no record of enforcement problems at hotels with honor bars. This bill provides an opportunity for motels to offer an in-room amenity that travelers will appreciate.

Testimony Against: Two of the three Liquor Control Board members are adamantly opposed to this bill. There is a great potential for loss of control. This would break new ground, allowing the sale of spirits without a requirement of a restaurant or food sales. The bill would increase the availability of liquor.

Witnesses: Carter Mitchell, Liquor Control Board (opposed); Becky Bogard, Washington State Hotel and Motel Association (in favor); Terry Lynch, Park Lane Motel and Inland Empire Innkeepers (in favor); and Ray Thieman, Red Top Motel, Washington State Hotel and Motel Association (in favor).