

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 6538

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Labor, Commerce, Research & Development, January 23, 2006

Title: An act relating to flavored malt beverage.

Brief Description: Regulating flavored malt beverage.

Sponsors: Senators Kohl-Welles, Parlette and Keiser; by request of Liquor Control Board.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Labor, Commerce, Research & Development: 1/23/06. [DP]

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, COMMERCE, RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Kohl-Welles, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Parlette, Ranking Minority Member; Honeyford, Keiser and Prentice.

Staff: Jennifer Strus (786-7316)

Background: In 2005, the federal Alcohol Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau adopted a standard for the use of flavorings that contain distilled spirits that may be added to malt beverages and still be considered malt beverages (or beer). Because Washington law defines "spirits" as any beverage which contains alcohol obtained by distillation, the law must be amended to allow malt beverages to continue to be considered beer products.

Summary of Bill: "Beer" is defined to include flavored malt beverages.

A definition of "flavored malt beverage" is added to comply with federal law. For malt beverages that contain 6 percent or less alcohol by volume, the amount of flavoring that contains distilled spirits must be no more than 49 percent of the total alcohol by volume contained in the malt beverage. 51 percent or more of the total alcohol content by volume must come from fermentation.

For malt beverages that contain more than 6 percent alcohol by volume, the amount of flavoring that contains distilled spirits must be no more than 1.5 percent of the total alcohol by volume contained in the malt beverage.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

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

Testimony For: This legislation is needed to bring Washington into compliance with recently passed federal regulations.

Testimony Against: None.

Who Testified: PRO: Rick Garza, Liquor Control Board; Phil Wagt, Washington Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association.

CON: No one.