
Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 1434

Brief Description: Creating a spirits, beer, and wine nightclub license and eliminating the cap on spirits, beer, and wine restaurant licenses.

Sponsors: Representatives Conway, Condotta, Wood and Kenney; by request of Liquor Control Board.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Creates a nightclub liquor license for the sale of spirits, beer, and wine by businesses with food sales incidental to the sale of alcohol and primary business hours between 9:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m.
- Removes the cap on the number of spirits, beer, and wine restaurant licenses in the state.

Hearing Date: 2/4/09

Staff: Joan Elgee (786-7106)

Background:

The Liquor Control Board (Board) issues a number of types of liquor licenses. A spirits, beer, and wine restaurant license allows the sale of spirits by the glass, beer, and wine for consumption on the premises. To qualify as a "restaurant," the establishment must be maintained in a substantial manner for preparing, cooking, and serving of complete meals. A cap limits the number of spirits, beer, and wine restaurant licenses to one license for each 1,300 people in the state. In addition, the Board must refuse a license if, in the Board's opinion, the licenses already granted are adequate for the reasonable needs of the community.

Before the Board issues any type of new or renewal license, it must give notice to the chief executive officer of the city, county, or town. Within 20 days, the local government may file written objections and the Board may hold a hearing. In determining whether to grant or renew a license, the Board must give substantial weight to objections from the local government based

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upon chronic illegal activity associated with the applicant's operation of the premises or of other licensed premises, or the conduct of the applicant's patrons inside or outside the premises. Before issuing a license, the Board must also give written notice to public institutions identified by the Board, churches, and schools within 500 feet of the premises. The Board must deny a license if a public school objects. "Public institution" is defined to mean institutions of higher education, parks, community centers, libraries, and transit centers.

Summary of Bill:

A spirits, beer, and wine nightclub license is created. A nightclub license may be issued only to persons whose business has food sales incidental to the sale of alcohol and has primary business hours between 9:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. A nightclub is an establishment that provides entertainment and has as its primary source of revenue the sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises, cover charges, or both, and has an occupancy load of 100 or more. The license allows the holder to sell at retail spirits by the drink, beer, and wine for consumption on the premises. Minors may be allowed on the premises but not in areas where alcohol is served or consumed. The annual fee is \$2,000 and the Board may review the fee and set it at a level sufficient to defray the costs of licensing and enforcement.

Local governments may petition the Board to request that further restrictions be imposed on a nightclub license in the interest of public safety. Examples include not allowing minors anywhere on the premises, submitting a security plan, or signing a good neighbor agreement with the local government. The Board must refuse to grant a nightclub license if the Board determines that the nightclub licenses already granted are adequate for the reasonable needs of the community.

Other liquor provisions, including alcohol server training requirements and tax provisions, are amended to include the spirits, beer, and wine nightclub license.

The definition of public institution for purposes of the requirement that the Board notify public institutions before issuing a license is deleted.

The cap on the number of spirits, beer, and wine restaurant licenses that may be issued statewide is deleted.

Rules Authority: The bill contains provisions addressing the rule-making authority of the Liquor Control Board.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.