

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 306

(Delegate Lisanti, *et al.*)

Economic Matters

Harford County - Alcoholic Beverages - Waiver From Distance Restrictions

This bill authorizes the Harford County Board of License Commissioners to waive specified distance restrictions prohibiting the issuance of an alcoholic beverages license near a place of worship and issue a Class B (on-sale) restaurant license, or a Class B café license, on a case-by-case basis. Before the board decides whether to waive the distance restrictions from a place of worship, a public hearing must be held by the governing body of the municipality where the restaurant is located, if the restaurant is located in a municipality, or by the county if the restaurant is located outside the boundaries of a municipality. The appropriate governing body must make a recommendation to the board regarding whether the distance restrictions should be waived. After receiving the recommendation, the board must hold a public hearing. When making a decision whether to waive the distance restrictions from a place of worship, the Board must take into consideration (1) the recommendation from the governing body; (2) comments received from leadership and individuals who attend the place of worship; and (3) comments made at the public hearing held by the Board. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Potential minimal increase in Harford County revenues due to licenses newly issued to previously ineligible establishments. County expenditures are not materially affected.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Current Law: Generally, the board may not issue a license for an establishment that is within 300 feet of a place of worship. The distance from the establishment to the place of worship is to be measured from the nearest point of the building of the establishment to the nearest point of the building of the place of worship. The board may issue a license for an establishment that is within 300 feet of a place of worship if it is (1) a one-day license for use in a building; (2) a license issued to a hotel, motel, restaurant, club, or caterer in a municipality; or (3) a Class H beer, wine, and liquor license issued to a caterer for use in a banquet facility in an establishment if the construction of the establishment was completed after July 1, 1991, and the establishment is used for emergency operations by a volunteer fire company.

Background: In fiscal 2019, there were 201 alcoholic beverages licenses issued in Harford County.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Harford County; Comptroller's Office; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 4, 2020
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