

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2021 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 617
Economic Matters

(Prince George's County Delegation)

**Prince George's County - Alcoholic Beverages - Licenses for Supermarkets PG
306-21**

This bill authorizes the Prince George's County Board of License Commissioners to issue a Class A beer and light wine license to a supermarket that has been certified by the Prince George's County Council as being located within a food desert or food swamp. The board may not issue more than three Class A beer and light wine licenses for use in any single legislative district. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Prince George's County revenues increase by \$10,000 in FY 2022 from licenses being issued to supermarkets under the bill. Prince George's County can likely handle any additional enforcement activity with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Minimal overall but potential meaningful to a small business supermarket that receives a Class A beer and light wine license under the bill.

Analysis

Current Law: Generally, in Prince George's County and throughout the State, except by way of renewal, or as otherwise provided, alcoholic beverages licenses may not be granted, transferred, or issued to, or for use in conjunction with, or upon the premises of any chain store, supermarket, or discount house.

In Prince George’s County, an establishment that held a license on July 1, 1973, may continue to hold that license and, at the discretion of the board, may change the class of the license.

In Prince George’s County, a Class A beer and light wine license generally authorizes a license holder to sell alcoholic beverages at retail in a sealed package or container, which may not be opened and its contents may not be consumed on the premises where the beer or light wine is sold. The annual license fee is \$500.

Local Fiscal Effect: For each additional Class A beer and wine license issued, Prince George’s County revenues increase by \$500. Prince George’s County estimates that 20 supermarkets may apply for a Class A beer and wine license under the bill in fiscal 2022. If all 20 supermarkets are issued licenses under the bill, revenues increase by \$10,000 in fiscal 2022. However, the board must verify that each additional license issued is located in a food desert or food swamp, likely limiting the number of licenses approved under the bill.

Additional Comments: The Prince George’s County Council Economic Development [Food Desert Relief Plan](#) maps food deserts in the county. In general, food deserts are usually low-income communities that lack grocery stores, farmers markets, and healthy food alternatives. Food swamps are communities that are oversaturated with unhealthy dining options like fast food restaurants.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: HB 291 of 2020, a similar bill, was referred to the House Economic Matters Committee, but no further action was taken.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Prince George’s County; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 17, 2021
rh/tso

Analysis by: Amberly Holcomb

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510