

VBA 2024 Legislative Report Week 16

Last Thursday, the Senate gave final approval to [their version](#) of the FY25 state budget. On Friday, both the House and the Senate appointed members to the budget conference committee. The naming of the budget conference committee signals that the end of the session is near. Leadership is aiming for a May 10 adjournment.

MISCELLANEOUS ALCOHOL BILL

On Friday, the Senate Economic Development Housing and General Affairs Committee voted to advance H.867, the Miscellaneous Alcohol Bill. The committee's [final version of the bill](#) is not substantially different than the bill passed by the House and includes the following provisions:

Special Venue Serving Permits. Sections 1-4 expand access to special venue serving permits. Under current law, a special venue serving permit may be granted to an art gallery, bookstore, public library or museum after receiving approval from the local control commission and paying a fee. A special venue serving permit authorizes the holder to serve (not sell) beer, wine or RTDs, purchased directly from a retailer. This proposal replaces the word “bookstore” with “retail establishment” thereby expanding the types of retailers that can access this type of permit. “Retail establishment” excludes cannabis stores and 802 stores. In addition, special venue permits are limited to 12 permits/year/location and limited to 6 hours in duration. The addition of “retail establishments” will sunset in two years so that lawmakers can evaluate whether they want this practice to continue.

Sampling Event Permit. Section 5 allows a sampling event permit holder to purchase invoiced volumes of alcoholic beverages from wholesale dealers. Under current law, a sampling event permit holder (formerly known as a festival permit) is allowed to purchase invoiced volumes of malt beverages directly from a manufacturer or packager. This change allows a permit holder, like the VBA, to purchase beer directly from a wholesale dealer, in addition to a manufacturer or a packager.

Special Event Permits. Section 6 increases the limit on special event permits that may be acquired by an individual licensee from 10 to 20. Under current law, a manufacturer is allowed to be issued up to 10 special event permits for the same physical location in a year. Each permit is good for the duration of the event or up to 4 days. A special event permit is a permit granted to a licensed manufacturer or rectifier and allows them to sell alcoholic beverages manufactured by the permit holder by the glass or unopened bottle within the confines of the special event. A special event permit also allows the manufacturer to serve or sell glasses of beverages in quantities of not more than two ounces per product and eight ounces total of malt beverages, vinous beverages, or

ready-to-drink spirits beverages and not more than one ounce in total of spirits or fortified wines to each individual. This proposal increases the number of special event permits a manufacturer is allowed to obtain in a year at a specific location from 10 to 20.

Liquor and Lottery Annual Report. Sec. 7 changes the month from January to March on which the DLL annual report is due to be delivered to the legislature.

Liquor Liability Insurance. Sec. 8 extends the date by which liquor licensees are required to have liability insurance from July 1, 2024 to July 1, 2026

Retail Master License Report Sec. 9 requests DLL to report back next year regarding the creation of a retail master license that can be granted to a person that acts as the parent corporation for licensed retail dealers or manufacturers that have merged. The report will include a proposal for legislation to create the license and an appropriate license fee.

Tobacco Retail Audit Sec. 10 requires DLL to collect comprehensive data during their regular audit of tobacco retailers “regarding the physical placement of beverage alcohol products in retail establishments to inform future public policy decisions” by the legislature.

The bill needs to make a quick stop in the Senate Finance committee before it goes to the full Senate for consideration.

HEADLINES OF NOTE

[Howard Dean weighs \(another\) run for governor](#)

[‘Provider burden’ bill passes Senate, despite last-minute effort to pump the brakes](#)

[Vermont Rep. Emilie Kornheiser Sees Raising Revenue as Part of Her Mission](#)

[Senate’s version of budget would reduce motel room capacity by a third](#)

[After debate over timelines, Vt. Senate strongly supports neonicotinoid ban](#)