

SUMMARY OF NO. 19-14

This proposed law would create a license allowing food stores to sell wine and beer for off-premises consumption, progressively increase and then eliminate the limit on the number of licenses for the sale of alcoholic beverages consumed off-premises that any one retailer could own or control, and require food stores and other retailers selling alcohol for consumption off-premises to implement certain age-verification policies to prevent the sale of alcohol to customers under age 21.

Beginning in December 2020, local licensing authorities could grant a food store license, which would allow food stores to sell wine and malt beverages to be consumed off the premises. A "food store" would include retail stores whose primary business is selling food for consumption off the premises, but it would not include a warehouse club.

Local licensing authorities would have the discretion to determine the number of food store licenses they issue and that number would be in addition to the other types of licenses currently issued for the sale of alcoholic beverages.

The proposed law would also change the statewide limits on the number of licenses for the sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption that any one retailer could own or control: from 9 to 12 licenses in 2021; to 15 in 2022; and to 18

in 2023. On January 1, 2024, this limit on the number of commonly owned or controlled licenses would be eliminated.

Under the proposed law, beginning in December 2020, food stores and other retailers selling alcoholic beverages for consumption off the premises would be required to ask for identification to verify the age of all customers purchasing alcohol. Permissible forms of identification would include driver's licenses, liquor purchase identification cards, passports, military identification cards, and other forms of identification that a retailer could verify as valid and authentic. Beginning in 2022, the proposed law would require retailers to use a barcode scanner or comparable technology to verify identification. At that time, the state Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission could allow for alternative measures of age verification.

The proposed law would require the Commission to employ at least one investigator for every 250 licenses granted for the sale of alcoholic beverages to be consumed off the premises.

The proposed law would create a separate fund consisting of certain fees collected by the Commission under this proposed law, certain alcohol excise taxes, and certain fines collected for the violation of rules governing the sale of alcohol. The collected funds would, subject to appropriation, go to the Commission for implementing the proposed law and enforcing the

state Liquor Control Act in general.