



Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board

Bill Description: Temporarily reducing certain liquor license fees

Bill Number: 3SHB 1359

Sponsor: Representative Monica Jurado Stonier

Effective Date: April 1, 2022

Amends: RCW 66.24.420, 66.24.590, 66.24.600, 66.24.655, 66.24.690, 66.24.140, 66.24.146, 66.24.170, 66.24.240, 66.24.244, 66.24.320, 66.24.330, 66.24.350, 66.24.540, 66.24.570, 66.24.580, 66.24.650, 66.24.495 and 66.24.680; and creates a new section

Background

The coronavirus pandemic forced many businesses to restrict operations to limit the spread of the virus and consequently, dramatically impacted their revenues. Among the most hard-hit economic sectors was the leisure/hospitality industry, including many businesses licensed by the LCB. Although some licensees were not adversely impacted by the pandemic, such as off-premise liquor retailers, many sustained significant losses. Among other steps taken by the state to mitigate these financial impacts on businesses, the Legislature approved ESSB 5272 in 2021. That measure waived license fees for specified liquor licensees for 12 months, beginning in April, 2021. The license fee waivers under ESSB 5272 expired March 31, 2022.

The financial harm to the hospitality industry and many liquor licensees has persisted into the third year of the pandemic. Many businesses have not reached pre-pandemic levels of revenue and many still struggle with losses accumulated during periods of curtailed activity and limited operations.

Summary

House Bill 1359 was introduced in 2021, but was not enacted, because ESSB 5272 was approved. But with expiration of the relief under ESSB 5272 approaching at the end of March, lawmakers revived HB 1359 to extend the period of relief for certain liquor licensees.

Under 3SHB 1359, specified liquor license fees, whether newly issued or renewals of previously granted licenses, will have their license fee cut in half. This 50% reduction in license fees will be in effect April 1, 2022 - December 31, 2023. The license types receiving the fee reduction are listed below:

Restaurants	Hotels	Motels	Snack Bars	Domestic Wineries
Theaters	Taverns	Caterers	Nightclubs	Domestic Breweries
Sports Entertainment	Senior Centers	Public Houses	Distillers	Microbreweries
Distiller Off-site Tasting Rooms	Nonprofit Arts Organizations			