



Bill Title: Creating a wine and beer tasting pilot project in grocery stores
Bill Number: ESB 5751
Effective Date: June 12, 2008
Amends: RCW 66.24.360

Background:

This bill authorizes a pilot project to allow 30 grocery stores to provide beer and wine tasting on the premises:

- The pilot project will be established by the Liquor Control Board
- It will consist of 30 locations and each location will be allowed to conduct a minimum of six tasting opportunities between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009
- The Board will determine pilot project locations
- The locations must be equally allocated between independently owned and nationally known chain grocery stores
- The grocery stores must operate a fully enclosed retail area at least 9,000 square feet
- Beer and wine samples must be two ounces or less (up to a total of four ounces per customer)
- Employees of licensees who are involved in tasting activities must complete a Board-approved limited alcohol server training program

Implementation:

The Pilot Program will begin October 1, 2008, and ends September 30, 2009. The 30 locations allowed for the Pilot Program will be selected by a lottery system as follows:

Licensees holding a grocery store liquor license will receive a letter from the Liquor Control Board explaining the requirements a licensee needs to meet to be considered for the pilot project. Licensees will be asked to answer the following questions:

- The size of their premises
- Their primary business
- Location of their business (city name)
- If they independently owned or part of a nationally known chain of grocery stores

If a grocery store licensee is interested in being part of the pilot project, they will need to sign the letter and return to the Licensing and Regulation Division.

When Licensing Division receives the letter:

Liquor Control Board Licensing Division employees will divide the letters received if interested licensees into the two categories defined in the bill:

- Independently owned stores
- Part of a nationally known chain of grocery stores

From each group, 15 licensees will be selected by lottery. The licensees selected will be notified by mail that they are one of the 15 selected to participate, and, about the required training for their employees involved in tasting activities and tasting areas within their stores.

Enforcement Division Involvement:

The Enforcement Division will be involved in the training required for this pilot project through the routine Identification and Over service (ID/OS) training currently given at the enforcement offices. There will not be specialized training.

The Liquor Control Board will develop a process for providing the employees with a verification card -- may even be our existing "blue card" -- for proof of training attendance. MAST permits will qualify as proof of training so those individuals will not have to attend further training.

Enforcement and Licensing divisions are working to establish the rules required to implement the pilot. To meet the requirement to provide a follow up report to the Legislature, enforcement officers will inspect a percentage of each licensee's events. The Governor's Office will monitor this program very closely.

Protocols for both licensee requirements and enforcement inspections will be established well ahead of the October implementation date. Reporting requirements for enforcement officers should consist of nothing more than an electronic notebook entry with the final compilation being done through Enforcement Headquarters.

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