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HOUSE BILL NO. 1400

Offered January 15, 2018

A *BILL to amend and reenact § 4.1-119 of the Code of Virginia, relating to alcoholic beverage control; distiller licensee; commission for sales on licensed premises.*

Patron—Head (By Request)

Referred to Committee on General Laws

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 4.1-119 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 4.1-119. Operation of government stores.**

A. Subject to the requirements of §§ 4.1-121 and 4.1-122, the Board may establish, maintain, and operate government stores for the sale of alcoholic beverages, other than beer and wine not produced by farm wineries, vermouth, mixers, products used in connection with distilled spirits, including any garnish or garnishment applied to the rim of a glass of distilled spirits, as may be approved by the Board from time to time, and products licensed by the Virginia Tourism Corporation as specified in § 4.1-103 in such counties, cities, and towns considered advisable by the Board. The Board may discontinue any such store.

B. With respect to the sale of wine or cider produced by farm wineries, the Board may give preference to farm wineries that produce 2,500 cases or less of wine or cider per year.

C. The Board shall fix the wholesale and retail prices at which the various classes, varieties and brands of alcoholic beverages and other Board-approved products that are sold in government stores. Differences in the cost of operating stores, and market competition and conditions may be reflected in the sale price of alcoholic beverages sold at government stores. The Board may sell alcoholic beverages to federal instrumentalities (i) authorized and operating under the laws of the United States and regulations of the United States Department of Defense and (ii) located within the boundaries of federal enclaves or reservations over which the United States has acquired jurisdiction, at prices which may be greater or less than the wholesale price charged other authorized purchasers. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to limit the authority of the Board to fix the retail price of alcoholic beverages sold at government stores, which retail price may include promotional, volume, or other discounts deemed appropriate by the Board.

D. Alcoholic beverages at government stores shall be sold by employees of the Authority who shall carry out the provisions of this title and Board regulations governing the operation of government stores and the sale of alcoholic beverages, except that the Board may appoint the holder of a distiller's license or its officers and employees as agents of the Board for the sale of spirits, manufactured by or for, or blended by such licensee on the licensed premises, at government stores established by the Board (i) on the distiller's licensed premises or (ii) at the site of an event licensed by the Board and conducted for the purpose of featuring and educating the consuming public about spirits products.

Such agents shall sell the spirits in accordance with the provisions of this title, Board regulations, and the terms of the agency agreement between the Authority and the licensed distiller. *The Authority shall pay a licensed distiller making sales pursuant to this subsection a commission of not less than 20 percent of the retail price of the spirits sold.*

For the purposes of this subsection, "blended" means the receipt by a licensed distiller of deliveries and shipments of alcoholic beverages, other than wine and beer, in accordance with subdivision 6 of § 4.1-201 to be (i) additionally aged by the receiving distillery in order to increase the quality and flavor of such alcoholic beverages and (ii) bottled by the receiving distillery.

E. (Effective until July 1, 2022) No Class 1 neutral grain spirit or alcohol, as defined by federal regulations, that is without distinctive character, aroma, taste or color shall be sold in government stores at a proof greater than 151 except upon permits issued by the Board for industrial, commercial, culinary, or medical use.

E. (Effective July 1, 2022) No Class 1 neutral grain spirit or alcohol, as defined by federal regulations, that is without distinctive character, aroma, taste or color shall be sold in government stores at a proof greater than 101 except upon permits issued by the Board for industrial, commercial, culinary, or medical use.

F. All alcoholic beverages sold in government stores, except for tasting samples pursuant to subsection G sold in government stores established by the Board on a distiller's licensed premises, shall be in closed containers, sealed and affixed with labels prescribed by the Board.

G. No alcoholic beverages shall be consumed in a government store by any person unless it is part

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59 of an organized tasting event conducted by (i) an employee of a manufacturer of distilled spirits or farm
60 winery or (ii) an authorized representative of a manufacturer of distilled spirits or farm winery with a
61 permit issued by the Board pursuant to subdivision A 15 of § 4.1-212, at which the samples of
62 alcoholic beverages provided to any consumer do not exceed the limits for spirits or wine set forth in
63 subdivision A 5 of § 4.1-201.1. No sample may be consumed by any individual to whom alcoholic
64 beverages may not lawfully be sold pursuant to § 4.1-304.

65 Notwithstanding the provision of this subsection to the contrary, an agent of the Board appointed
66 pursuant to subsection D may give samples of spirits, beer, wine, or cider to persons to whom alcoholic
67 beverages may be lawfully sold for on-premises consumption, provided that (i) the spirits, beer, wine, or
68 cider samples are manufactured within the same licensed premises or on contiguous premises of such
69 agent licensed as a distillery, brewery, or winery or cider; (ii) no single sample shall exceed four ounces
70 of beer, two ounces of wine, or one-half ounce of spirits, unless served as a mixed beverage, in which
71 case a single sample of spirits may contain up to one and one-half ounces of spirits; (iii) no more than
72 four total samples of alcoholic beverage products or, in the case of spirits samples, no more than three
73 ounces of spirits shall be given or sold to any person per day; and (iv) in the case of spirits samples, a
74 method is used to track the consumption of each consumer. Nothing in this paragraph shall prohibit such
75 agent from serving samples of spirits as part of a mixed beverage.

76 The Board shall establish guidelines governing tasting events conducted pursuant to this subsection.

77 H. With respect to purchases by licensees at government stores, the Authority shall (i) accept in
78 payment for any purchase or series of purchases cash, electronic fund transfer, credit or debit card, or
79 check payable to the Authority, in the exact amount of any such purchase or series of purchases and (ii)
80 provide notice to licensees on Board policies relating to the assignment of government stores from
81 which licensees may purchase products and any procedure for the licensee to elect to make purchases
82 from an alternative government store.

83 I. With respect to purchases by consumers at government stores, the Authority shall accept cash in
84 payment for any purchase or series of purchases. The Board may adopt regulations which provide for
85 accepting a credit card or debit card as payment. Such regulations may provide for the collection, where
86 appropriate, of related fees, penalties and service charges for the use of a credit card or debit card by
87 any consumer.

88 J. Before the Authority implements any increase in the markup on distilled spirits or any change to
89 the markup formula for distilled spirits pursuant to § 4.1-235 that would result in an increase in the
90 retail price of distilled spirits sold to the public, the Authority shall (i) provide at least 45 days' public
91 notice before such a price increase takes effect; (ii) provide the opportunity for submission of written
92 comments regarding the proposed price increase; (iii) conduct a public meeting for the purpose of
93 receiving verbal comment regarding the proposed price increase; and (iv) consider any written or verbal
94 comments before implementing such a price increase.