

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2013 SESSION

CHAPTER 3

An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 4.1-509.1, relating to alcoholic beverage control; contemplated actions by brewery or beer wholesaler.

[H 1587]

Approved February 15, 2013

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 4.1-509.1 as follows:

§ 4.1-509.1. Board proceedings; contemplated actions by brewery or wholesaler.

A. For purposes of this section, "contemplated action" means an action proposed by a brewery or wholesaler that (i) if carried out would violate any provision of this chapter or subdivision 1 c (v) of § 4.1-225 and (ii) is demonstrated by a specific written statement authored by a brewery or an employee of a wholesaler who is specifically authorized by virtue of job title and responsibility to make such statement and such other evidence as may be required by the Board pursuant to the facts of any given circumstance.

B. Subsequent to compliance with subsection D, any wholesaler may file a petition against a brewery, and any brewery may file a petition against a wholesaler, in which the petitioner alleges that the respondent named in the petition as a matter of past or present fact has contemplated action that if carried out would violate any provision of this chapter or subdivision 1 c (v) of § 4.1-225. Any such petition filed shall identify with specificity the alleged contemplated action, the document in which such contemplated action is described or authorized, and specify the provision of law or regulation that the contemplated action would violate if carried out. The petition shall include a statement that a controversy as to the lawfulness of the contemplated action exists. The statement shall be supported by evidence of the petitioner's good faith effort to resolve the controversy in accordance with subsection D. The petitioner shall have the burden of establishing that the contemplated actions identified in the petition, if carried out, would violate any provision of law or regulation enumerated in this subsection. The Board may, if it finds that a brewery or wholesaler has frivolously maintained a petition or defense to a proceeding pursuant to this chapter, award reasonable costs and attorney fees to the prevailing party.

C. Any petition filed by a brewery or wholesaler pursuant to this section shall be delivered to the Secretary of the Board. The Board shall promptly issue a written determination as to whether a violation or attempted violation as alleged in the petition has occurred. In addition, the Board shall promptly issue a written determination as to whether a violation alleged in the petition would occur if the contemplated action identified in the petition were to be carried out.

D. Prior to filing a petition, a party shall communicate with the party alleged to be considering a contemplated action and initiate a good faith attempt to resolve the issue in question. If within 21 days of initiating the communication required by this subsection, or such longer period of time if mutually agreed upon, there is no resolution, either party may proceed to file a petition in accordance with subsection B.