
State Government & Tribal Affairs
Committee

SSB 5156

Brief Description: Concerning airport lounges under the alcohol beverage control act.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection (originally sponsored by Senators Kohl-Welles, King, Keiser, Delvin and Conway).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Creates a liquor license allowing VIP airport lounge operators to serve spirits, beer, and wine for on premises consumption.

Hearing Date: 3/17/11

Staff: Joan Elgee (786-7106).

Background:

The Liquor Control Board (Board) issues various types of retail liquor licenses. Establishments authorized to sell spirits by the drink with a license from the Board include spirits, beer and wine restaurants; private clubs; hotels; and sports entertainment facilities. These licensees may purchase liquor from the Board at a 15 percent discount. Servers employed with these licensees must have a mandatory alcohol server training (MAST) permit.

License fees and penalties from these licenses are distributed to the state toxicology program, the University of Washington and Washington State University for alcoholism and drug abuse research, and the Department of Social and Health Services for various alcohol and other drug addiction purposes.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

A new VIP airport lounge liquor license is created. The license allows a VIP airport lounge operator to sell or provide spirits, wine, and beer at an airport lounge for on premises consumption. An operator is an airline, port district, or other entity that is accountable for legal compliance with state laws relating to alcohol, holds the applicable license, and is the contact for licensing and enforcement.

A VIP airport lounge is an establishment in an international airport, beyond security checkpoints, that provides a special space to sit, relax, read, work, and enjoy beverages where access is controlled by the VIP airport lounge operator and is generally limited to:

- ticketed first-class, executive, or business class airline passengers of any age;
- airline passengers of any age who are qualified members or guests of frequent flyer or other airline loyalty incentive programs or enhanced amenities programs;
- passengers or airline employees of any age issued a pass by the airline for access; and
- airport and airline employees, government officials, and other attendees of functions held by the airport authority or airlines for business promotion such as increasing international air traffic and enhancing foreign trade.

The VIP airport lounge operator may only serve liquor from a service bar. A service bar is a work station primarily used to prepare and sell alcoholic beverages that are picked up by employees or customers. Customers may not sit and consume food or alcohol at a service bar.

The VIP airport lounge operator may purchase spirits from the Board at a discount, and may purchase beer and wine at retail outlets or from a manufacturer or distributor. Servers must have a valid MAST permit. The annual licensing fee for a VIP Airport Lounge license is \$2,000. License fees and penalties are distributed in the same manner as license fees for other licenses allowing the sale of spirits.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.