

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2656

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to liquor licenses for sports entertainment facilities.

Brief Description: Creating a new class of liquor license for sports entertainment facilities.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Commerce & Labor (originally sponsored by Representatives Cairnes, Romero and Thompson).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Commerce & Labor: 1/22/96, 1/25/96 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/6/96, 93-3.

Senate Amended.

House Concurred.

Passed Legislature.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE & LABOR

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives McMorris, Chairman; Hargrove, Vice Chairman; Thompson, Vice Chairman; Romero, Ranking Minority Member; Conway, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cairnes; Cody; Cole; Fuhrman; Goldsmith; Horn and Lisk.

Staff: Pam Madson (786-7166).

Background: Sporting entertainment facilities present a unique setting for the sale and service of alcohol.

Current law allows publicly-owned civic centers to serve alcohol through Class H licensees who operate at least one dining place in the facility. The dining place must offer full meal service.

Those licenses that allow beer, wine, and liquor to be served to the public for consumption on the licensee's premises each possess restrictions and limitations that do not fit the special needs of civic centers and conventions facilities offering a

variety of events. For example, the Class H license allows the sale of liquor by the drink at a restaurant that meets certain criteria. The restaurant facility must offer food service at least five hours a day during days of operation and must offer service to the public at least five days a week. Alcoholic beverage service is restricted to the restaurant area. The requirements that accompany a Class H license are not designed to apply to a large arena facility that is used for a variety of events.

Stadium and arena facilities currently licensed under Class H licenses pay between \$2,300 and \$2,500 for licenses. The license fee for those facilities licensed to sell beer only pay significantly less.

Beginning July 1, 1996, employees of retail liquor licensees holding licenses for consumption of alcohol on premises must hold a permit evidencing that they have received training on the effects of alcohol, legal liability relating to alcohol, and how to deal with customers.

Summary of Bill: A Class R license is created to be issued by the Liquor Control Board to an entity providing food and beverage service in a sports entertainment facility. A sports entertainment facility is a publicly- or privately-owned facility where sporting events are held and the public pays admission to attend.

The license allows the sale of beer, wine, and liquor for consumption on the premises of the facility. Additional conditions may be placed on the licensee such as requirements for the availability of food. The board may determine whether or not alcohol may be served depending on the type of event that is held. The board may also consider the seating accommodations, eating facilities, and circulation patterns in setting conditions on the licensee.

The license fee is \$2,500 annually.

Licensees holding Class R liquor licenses and alcohol servers who are employed by these licensees must comply with requirements for training and employment of alcohol servers.

Privately-owned civic or convention centers may serve alcohol through a Class H licensee who operates at least one dining place in the facility.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: New stadiums and arenas for sporting events contain a variety of seating arrangements and special areas that allow for group seating and access to restaurant facilities. Current on-premises liquor licenses that allow the sale of alcohol at these facilities restrict the movement of patrons who have purchased and are carrying alcohol from the concession to their seating. A new license that would allow more freedom of movement within the facility is preferable and will return the integrity of existing licenses currently being used to allow alcohol service in these facilities.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Becky Bogard, Ackerley Communications; Carter Mitchell, Washington State Liquor Control Board; and Jim Halstrom, Northwest Racing Association.