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**HOUSE BILL 1176**

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**State of Washington 65th Legislature 2017 Regular Session**

**By** Representative Muri

AN ACT Relating to the alcoholic beverage mead; and amending RCW 66.24.215 and 66.28.360.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

**Sec.**  RCW 66.24.215 and 2015 c 76 s 2 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) To provide for permanent funding of the wine commission after July 1, 1989, agricultural commodity assessments must be levied by the board on wine producers and growers as follows:

(a) Beginning on July 1, 1989, the assessment on wine producers is two cents per gallon on sales of packaged Washington wines.

(b) Beginning on July 1, 1989, the assessment on growers of Washington vinifera wine grapes is levied as provided in RCW 15.88.130.

(c) After July 1, 1993, assessment rates under (a) of this subsection ((~~(1)(a) of this section~~)) may be changed pursuant to a referendum conducted by the Washington wine commission and approved by a majority vote of wine producers. The weight of each producer's vote must be equal to the percentage of that producer's share of Washington vinifera wine production in the prior year.

(d) After July 1, 1993, assessment amounts under (b) of this subsection ((~~(1)(b) of this section~~)) may be changed pursuant to a referendum conducted by the Washington wine commission and approved by a majority vote of grape growers. The weight of each grower's vote must be equal to the percentage of that grower's share of Washington vinifera grape sales in the prior year.

(e) After July 1, 2015, the assessment amounts under this section may not be levied on the production of cider as defined in RCW 66.24.210.

(f) After January 1, 2018, the assessment amounts under this section may not be levied on the production of mead. For purposes of this section, "mead" means a wine or malt beverage of which honey represents the largest percentage of the starting fermentable sugars by weight of the finished product and that:

(i) Is derived from a mixture of honey and water, which may contain hops, fruit, spices, grain, and other agricultural products or flavors; and

(ii) Is sold or offered for sale as mead.

(2) Assessments collected under this section must be disbursed quarterly to the Washington wine commission for use in carrying out the purposes of chapter 15.88 RCW.

(3) Prior to July 1, 1996, a referendum must be conducted to determine whether to continue the Washington wine commission as representing both wine producers and grape growers. The voting may not be weighted. The wine producers must vote whether to continue the commission's coverage of wineries and wine production. The grape producers must vote whether to continue the commission's coverage of issues pertaining to grape growing. If a majority of both wine and grape producers favor the continuation of the commission, the assessments must continue as provided in subsection ((~~(2)~~)) (1)(b) and (d) of this section. If only one group of producers favors the continuation, the assessments may only be levied on the group which favored the continuation.

**Sec.**  RCW 66.28.360 and 2014 c 54 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) Licensees holding either a license that permits or a license with an endorsement that permits the sale of beer to a purchaser in a container supplied by the licensee or a sanitary container brought to the premises by the purchaser and filled at the tap at the time of sale may similarly sell cider and mead to a purchaser in such a container. Nothing in this section relieves a licensee from complying with federal law.

(2) For purposes of this section, "cider" has the same meaning as in RCW 66.24.210(6) and "mead" has the same meaning as in RCW 66.24.215.

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