
Commerce & Labor Committee

HB 2794

Brief Description: Allowing licensees to pay for liquor using debit and credit cards.

Sponsors: Representatives Condotta and Wood.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Permits Liquor Control Board licensed organizations to pay for purchases from state liquor stores with credit or debit cards.

Hearing Date: 2/2/04

Staff: Susan Kavanaugh (786-7106).

Background:

Washington operates 154 liquor stores directly and contracts with vendors to operate an additional 157. Spirits (hard liquor) may be sold only in these stores.

In 1997, the Legislature authorized purchases at state-operated liquor stores by individual consumers, anyone other than a licensee, to be paid for using a credit or debit card. The legislation also permitted vendor-operated liquor stores to accept credit and debit cards from non-licensees. The following year, the Legislation directed the Liquor Control Board (Board) to pay for acquisition and maintenance of credit card machines at liquor stores through the Liquor Revolving Fund.

There are 3,056 restaurants licensed by the Board to sell beer, wine, and spirits for on-premises consumption. In the absence of authority to use credit and debit cards, restaurants and other organizations licensed by the Board either pay cash for purchases from state liquor stores or enter into a check signing agreement with the Board.

Summary of Bill:

The changes made in 1997 and 1998, allowing use of credit and debit cards for liquor store purchases by individual consumers, are extended to include licensed organizations such as restaurants:

- Purchases made at state operated liquor stores by licensees may be paid for using a credit or debit card.
- Liquor vendors may also accept credit and debit cards for liquor purchased by licensees.

- Credit card equipment purchased and maintained with money from the Liquor Revolving Fund may be used for purchases by licensees.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 28, 2004.

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