SENATE BILL REPORT
HB 1636

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Labor & Commerce, April 1, 2025

Title: An act relating to simplifying administration of wine and spirit sales by eliminating the per transaction limit for volume.

Brief Description: Eliminating the per transaction limit for wine and spirit sales.

Sponsors: Representatives Volz, Hackney, Walen, McClintock, Chase and Parshley.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/11/25, 91-5.
Committee Activity: Labor & Commerce: 3/31/25, 4/01/25 [DP, DNP, w/oRec].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Removes the 24-liter limit on a single sale of certain alcohol products from specified liquor licensees to retailers licensed to sell alcohol products for on-premises consumption.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & COMMERCE

Majority Report: Do pass.
Signed by Senators Saldaña, Chair; King, Ranking Member; Alvarado, Braun, MacEwen and Schoesler.

Minority Report: Do not pass.
Signed by Senator Stanford.

Minority Report: That it be referred without recommendation.
Signed by Senators Conway, Vice Chair; Ramos.

Staff: Marlon Llanes (786-7423)

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

Background: State law regulates the manufacture, distribution, and retail sale of liquor including spirits, wine, and beer. The Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB) issues various types of liquor licenses and endorsements, including a spirits retail license and a wine retailer reseller endorsement.

Licenses and Endorsements. A spirits retail license allows a licensee to, among other things, sell spirits in original containers to retailers licensed to sell spirits for consumption on the premises if a single sale does not exceed 24 liters. The 24-liter limit does not apply if a sale is made by a licensee who was a manager of a contract liquor store and is made on the premises of the licensed location.

A combination spirits, beer, and wine license allows a licensee to, among other things, sell spirits in original containers to retailers licensed to sell spirits for consumption on the premises if a single sale does not exceed 24 liters.

A wine retailer reseller endorsement allows a licensee to sell wine at retail in original containers to retailers licensed to sell wine for consumption on the premises if a single sale does not exceed 24 liters. The 24-liter limit does not apply if a sale is made by a licensee that is a former state or contract liquor store at the location from which such sales are made. The endorsement is available to licensees of a grocery store license and a beer or wine specialty shop license.

Definitions. "Contract liquor store" means a business that sells liquor on behalf of LCB through a contract with a contract liquor store manager.

"Spirits" means any beverage which contains alcohol obtained by distillation, except flavored malt beverages, but including wines exceeding 24 percent of alcohol by volume (ABV).

"Wine" means any alcoholic beverage obtained by fermentation of fruits, such as grapes, berries, or apples, or other agricultural product containing sugar, to which any saccharine substances may have been added before, during, or after fermentation, and containing no more than 24 percent ABV, including sweet wines fortified with wine spirits, such as port, sherry, muscatel, and angelica, not exceeding 24 percent and not less than 0.5 percent ABV.

Summary of Bill: The 24-liter limit on a single sale of certain alcohol products from specified liquor licensees to retailers licensed to sell alcohol products for on-premises consumption is removed. This applies to holders of the following liquor licenses and endorsements:

- the combination spirits, beer, and wine license;
- the spirits retail license; and
- the wine retailer reseller endorsement.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill simplifies administrative requirements for the sale of liquor. It is inefficient for a store to split purchases into multiple transactions to comply with the letter of the law.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Brad Tower, Washington Liquor Store Association; Sean DeWitz, Washington Hospitality Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.