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February 6, 2018

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NOTICE

**BOARD OF LIQUOR LICENSE COMMISSIONERS FOR BALTIMORE CITY SUPPORTS 2018
LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE TO IMPROVE LICENSING EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS**

Baltimore, MD – On behalf of the Board of Liquor License Commissioners for Baltimore City (BLLC) and in an effort to improve agency operations, the following proposed bills were introduced this Maryland General Assembly session:

- **Residency and Registered Voter Requirements – SB395/HB448**
 - o Current law requires that at least one licensee on each license issued by the Board shall live in Baltimore City and be a registered voter. Per the Court of Appeals, such conditions may be unconstitutional and discriminate against non-residents and legal aliens. This bill will require that at least one applicant on each license be a State resident and eliminate the registered voter requirement, which is consistent with current law in Montgomery and Prince Georges County.
- **Protest of License Renewal – SB398/HB747**
 - o Current law states that the Board has no other option than to hold a protest of renewal hearing and determine whether or not to renew the license. Under this bill, upon receiving a valid protest of renewal the Board has the authority to send the protesting party and licensee to mediation at no cost. If the parties cannot come to an agreement, then the Board will move forward and hold a protest of renewal hearing.
- **Suspension based on Unpaid Personal Property Tax – SB401/HB789**
 - o Current law requires that the BLLC automatically suspend a license if the licensee does not provide proof to the agency that its personal property taxes have been paid by June 30 of each year.

Information regarding proof of payment is not verifiably available to either the licensee or the BLLC by June 30 of each year. This bill would extend the deadline for submission of such documentation until October 30 of each year.

- **License Application Newspaper Notice – SB399**
 - o Current law requires that the BLLC advertise each new/transfer/expansion application in three (3) newspapers of general circulation within the City. As print media options have declined, the BLLC has faced issues identifying and contracting with reliable vendors for publication. Other major jurisdictions within the State of Maryland either advertise on-line or do so with fewer publications – Montgomery County (on-line only), Baltimore County (2 newspapers), Prince Georges County (2 newspapers), Anne Arundel County (2 newspapers). In addition to the frequent announcements and notice from BLLC, this bill would reduce the number of print newspapers that the BLLC would advertise in from 3 to 2.
- **Class A-7 Licenses – SB519/HB745**
 - o Current law allows for the issuance and transfer of a Class BD7 license, which allows its holder to operate a tavern and sell alcoholic beverages on premise and off premise from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m., 7 days per week. Past practice indicates that there are some operators of BD7 licenses that do not comply with the law and close their tavern portion of their establishment, while continuing to sell package goods. Ensuring that licensees are in compliance requires inspection resources which could be shifted to other needs. In addition, operation of these BD7 establishments until 2 a.m. can lead to nuisances occurring in and around the establishment burdening the surrounding neighborhood. This bill would only allow current BD7 licensees a limited time to convert their licenses to 7- day off-premise package goods stores, whose hours of operation would be from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Chairman Albert J. Matricciani, Jr, stated that “Over the past year and half, the agency has held numerous meetings with community organizations, businesses, and other stakeholders around the City concerning ways in which the BLLC could improve its operations.” Matricciani added, “As a result of those conversations, agency staff was directed to work with the City’s Senate and House Delegation leadership to develop a legislative package to address the concerns raised during these meetings. We welcome additional comments from the public and I thank the City’s leadership in the legislature for introducing these bills.”

Interested persons seeking more information may contact the BLLC via phone at (410) 396-4377. Inquiries may also be sent via email to Thomas R. Akras, Deputy Executive Secretary (Thomas.Akras@baltimorecity.gov).

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