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SB 99 Sponsor Statement

Alcoholic Beverage Control

SB 99 makes important updates to statutes governing the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board to allow the Board to function more efficiently and continue to regulate the alcoholic beverage industry in a manner that promotes public safety and health while allowing the industry continued viability. This bill is the product of a two-year, unprecedented collaboration of stakeholders from a diverse group of industry representatives and public health and safety entities. The result is a reorganization of Alaska Statutes, Title 4, to set out the rights and obligations of licensees and the consuming public in a logical, and well-organized manner.

SB 99 would amend and clarify provisions on the appointment of the five-member ABC Board. Adequate representation would occur through appointment of persons from the public safety sector, public health sector, from a rural area, and the general public. Not more than two of the members may be actively engaged in the alcoholic beverage industry. The director of the ABC Board, depending on experience, could represent one of the enumerated sectors. A new section is added to the director's duties to require preparation of an annual budget to cover enforcement, education, training, and prevention activities. SB 99 would require the ABC Board to review fees not less than every 10 years.

Provisions on fines and penalties for engaging in prohibited acts are updated for clarity as to when fines and penalties may be imposed. Other penalty sections are amended to enable consistent and predictable enforcement and just outcomes.

The new statutory provisions continue with the three-tier licensing system for manufacturer, wholesaler, and retail licenses; create a new endorsement system to expand the boundaries of licensed businesses and accommodate special events; and modify the permitting system for clarity. Through this more comprehensive licensing structure, persons wishing to participate in the industry will know better what activities are allowed for each license type. The bill adds some provisions that reflect industry trends toward product tastings to authorize a holder of a beverage dispensary license to sell or dispense alcoholic beverages at a permitted tasting event.

Passage of SB 99 will protect Alaskans, provide clarity for alcoholic beverage licensees and the public, and result in more consistent enforcement of the alcoholic beverage industry.

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