

Businesses face alcohol license limbo as changes considered

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Comments

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Some Alaska businesses that have been allowed to sell alcohol for years are finding that the state is denying their license renewals.

Taku Lanes, the only bowling alley in Alaska's capital, has been warning customers that no alcohol is available for purchase after the state Alcoholic Beverage Control Board recently denied its license renewal, KTOO Public Media in Juneau reported Friday.

The bowling alley has been serving alcohol for over a decade without problem.

"We've been losing a lot of customers," said Kenny Paquin, the manager of Taku Lanes.

Venues like bowling alleys and ski areas are not included in a provision of state law that outlines the recreational places or events where alcohol sales are permitted. The state alcohol board said it's trying to follow existing state statute for these licenses.

The Eaglecrest Ski Area in Juneau was expecting to open a bar this season until the alcohol board rejected its application last fall. The board also threatened to deny the alcohol license for the Alaska State Fair, prompting lawmakers to proposed fixes.

Republican state Sen. Peter Micciche has proposed legislation that would expand the definition of recreational sites, adding ski and snowboard areas and some other types of businesses to the list.

"So what the bill is focused on is people that have traditionally operated — quality operators licensed under the law that are currently at risk," Micciche said.

The measure doesn't address bowling alleys, but Micciche said he's open to including other affected businesses.

"I see no opposition to this legislation," Micciche said. "I think it's likely that we move through this in a schedule that avoids that interruption to business."

In the meantime, the bowling alley that hosts a legislative league plans to hold special promotions to get people in the door, Paquin said.

"Dollar bowling, so it'll be like a \$5 cover charge, \$1 for shoes and \$1 per game, all day, every day," Paquin said.