Lowndes

Insights

Change in Florida Alcohol Statute Eases Requirements for Restaurant Liquor Licenses

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Until recently, Florida restaurants needed to maintain 2,500 square feet of service area and be able to serve meals to 150 persons at one time (i.e., 150 or more patron seats on the premises) to hold a non-quota full-service beer, wine and liquor license, also known as a "Specialty Food Service" (SFS) license. However, with the recent passage of SB1262/HB639 - "Issuance of Special Beverage Licenses," these requirements have been revised.

Now, restaurants can qualify for SFS licensure with a reduced service area of 2,000 square feet and 120 seats. These changes will make it easier for smaller restaurants to qualify for SFS licensure, providing a more affordable option to sell full liquor on their premises without having to purchase a quota license from the open market.

If your restaurant was previously barred from obtaining an SFS license due to service area or seating constraints, you may now be able to qualify to for a full-service beer, wine and liquor license. Alternatively, if you desire to amend your license to reduce the seating and square footage provided, a modification form can also be filed.

If you have any questions about qualification or need assistance with amending your alcohol license, please contact one of our hospitality attorneys, Tara Tedrow or Alyson Hoffman.

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