

**Joint Committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure
2025-2026 (194th) Bill Summary**

BILL NUMBER: H351

TITLE: An Act relative to the sale of liquor licenses

SPONSOR(S): Cusack, Mark

HEARING DATE: July 7, 2025

REPORTING DEADLINE: September 5, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY

(2017-2018): H1977 – Accompanied a study order, see H4638.

(2019-2020): H219 - Accompanied a study order, see H5043.

(2021-2022): H343 - Accompanied a study order, see H4880.

(2023-2024): H272 – Accompanied a study order, see H4680.

CURRENT LAW

Chapter 138 of the Massachusetts General Laws governs alcohol licenses in the Commonwealth.

Section 17 of Chapter 138 regulates the number of available licenses within each city or town. The number of licenses available within each municipality is based on population and set by a statutory formula in this section. There is a three-step process that an applicant for an alcoholic beverage license must follow: (1) the application for the license must be filed, then granted by the municipality; (2) the applicant and license application must be approved by the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission (ABCC); and (3) after approval by the ABCC, the municipality must issue the license(s).

SUMMARY

This legislation would allow a city or town to collect a fee, not to exceed 25% of the cost, for any alcohol license issued by the city or town pursuant to Chapter 138 when such license is sold by the licensee to another licensee. Said fee shall be assessed at the time of the approval of the transfer of said license.