

WHEREAS, The General Assembly has declared, as a matter of State policy, that former tobacco farms be converted to vineyards to provide a new value-added agricultural product; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly has a history of promoting value-added agricultural products as a method of preserving agricultural land in Maryland; and

WHEREAS, The Governor's Advisory Commission on Wine Making and Grape Growing stated that every \$3 invested in Maryland wineries results in \$1 earned in tourist trade to those wineries; and

~~WHEREAS, Small wineries cannot economically use the services of a wholesaler to distribute their wine product to restaurants and retail outlets throughout the State; now, therefore;~~

~~SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:~~

~~WHEREAS, It is the intent of the General Assembly to provide both in-State and out-of-State small wineries with market opportunities and equal access to Maryland retailers; and~~

~~WHEREAS, It is the intent of the General Assembly to maintain its general reliance on the three-tier system to uniformly regulate the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages; and~~

~~WHEREAS, The General Assembly, based on its deliberations, finds that all wineries in the State and out of the State that produce less than 27,500 gallons annually require special recognition within the three-tier system in order to grow and maintain financial viability; now, therefore,~~

~~SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That Section(s) 5-301(c), (d), and (e), respectively, of Article - Tax - General of the Annotated Code of Maryland be renumbered to be Section(s) 5-301(d), (e), and (f), respectively.~~

~~SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:~~

Article 2B - Alcoholic Beverages

1-102.

(a) (1) In this article the following words have the meanings indicated.

(27) (I) "Wholesaler" means:

1. [a] A person who purchases or imports any alcoholic beverage for sale to wholesale or retail dealers only[, and includes a county liquor control board and a county wholesale dispensary]; OR

2. A LIMITED WINERY THAT SELLS WINE TO RETAIL DEALERS.