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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR De La Cruz/Maestas LAST UPDATED _____
ORIGINAL DATE 3/32025
BILL
SHORT TITLE 18-Year-Olds Delivering & Stocking Liquor NUMBER House Bill 443
ANALYST Montano

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
RLD/ABC	No fiscal impact	\$1.5	No fiscal impact	\$1.5	Nonrecurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.

*Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency Analysis Received From

Regulation and Licensing Department (RLD)

Department of Workforce Solutions (DWS)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of House Bill 443

House Bill 443 (HB443) amends sections of the Liquor Control Act to allow individuals at least 18 years old to deliver and stock packaged alcoholic beverages under specific conditions. The bill updates existing laws to expand employment opportunities for younger workers in the alcohol distribution and retail industries while maintaining restrictions on bartending and alcohol sampling for those under 21.

Under the bill, licensed wholesalers and retailers may now employ 18-year-olds to transport, handle, and stock sealed alcoholic beverage containers, including bottles, cans, and kegs. Previously, individuals under 21 were prohibited from engaging in these tasks unless they held a commercial driver's license (CDL). HB443 removes the CDL requirement and broadens eligibility for employment in warehouse operations and delivery services for alcohol wholesalers and licensed retailers.

The bill also clarifies that 18-year-olds working in licensed establishments may perform certain duties related to alcohol service, provided that the business is a restaurant, club, or retailer where food sales are the primary source of revenue. However, individuals under 21 years old cannot serve as bartenders or engage in alcohol sampling.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the Legislature adjourns if enacted, or June 20, 2025.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

RLD is projecting a one-time cost of \$1,500 to effectively change the necessary rules throughout the NM Plus licensing system and RLD's website.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The enactment of HB443 could potentially increase access to alcohol for underaged workers. Allowing 18-year-olds to handle and transport alcohol increases the risk of improper access and potential underage consumption. While the bill prohibits minors from serving alcohol, it does not specify additional safeguards to prevent diversion of alcohol by young workers. The lack of direct supervision provisions could create enforcement challenges for employers and regulatory agencies. The bill aims to expand job opportunities for young workers, particularly in retail, warehousing, and delivery services. However, public safety concerns related to underage access, improper handling, and liability risks may outweigh the economic benefits.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

ABC will need to amend its promulgated rules in order to allow for eighteen (18) year olds without a CDL to make deliveries on behalf of wholesalers to retail outlets and remain on the licensed premises while stocking the alcoholic beverages delivered.

NM/hj/SL2