

Raleigh Approves Social District

The article below was excerpted from a Spectrum News story published on July 5. Click to read the entire article.

Soon, people in downtown Raleigh will be able to walk into a bar and get a beer to go. Raleigh City Council voted last week to create a new “social district” downtown.

City Council members debated the new social district idea for months before agreeing on an area that includes much of the downtown core. The social district would operate every day from 11am to 10pm.

The North Carolina General Assembly passed a [law last year to allow cities and towns to establish public drinking districts](#). The bill was supported by NCTIA.

Several cities have already created social districts, including Greensboro, Kannapolis and Monroe, according to the North Carolina ABC Commission. Charlotte, New Bern, Wilmington and Winston-Salem are also considering setting up social districts.

For more information on how to apply for a social district, visit [this link provided by the NC ABC Commission](#).

2022 ABC Modernization Bill Now Law

On June 30, Governor Roy Cooper signed [HB768 \(2022 ABC Omnibus\)](#), a bill supported by NCTIA that eases restrictions on bar owners and its patrons.

HB768 contained the contents of [HB1108 \(Allow ABC Permits for Bars\)](#), which this e-newsletter reported on in the June 10 edition. Like HB 1008, HB768 repeals the requirement for bars to maintain a membership registry.

Before now, North Carolina establishments bringing in 30% or less in food or non- alcoholic sales were considered private clubs or bars. These private clubs or bars were required to charge a \$1 annual membership fee to customers and “members” had to sign in before being served an alcoholic drink.

“We commend the General Assembly for passing this common sense legislation, for Representative Tim Moffitt’s leadership on it, and for Governor Roy Cooper signing it into law,” said NCTIA Executive Director Vince Chelena. “We have so many visitors to North Carolina confused on why they have to join a private club to have a drink at a bar. This bill erases that confusion.”

Another provision in HB768 allows for distilleries to obtain mixed beverage permits to allow the distillery to sell its spirituous liquor where a hotel or restaurant is catering food for an event. Distilleries can serve their liquor regardless of whether the hotel or restaurant holds a mixed beverage catering permit. Distillers will also be allowed to sell its products at its distilleries whether liquor has been approved by local referendum or not, according to the legislation.

Although the bill passed with overwhelming bipartisan support – which would signal that ABC modernization bills are less controversial – [HB1135 \(ABC Laws/Local Sales Option\)](#) was not included in 2022 Omnibus ABC nor was it enacted as a stand alone bill. HB1135 would have allowed local governments to establish a “happy hour” ordinance and to authorize the advertisement of products sold in a bar and restaurant.

NCTIA would like to thank [the NC Bar Owners Association](#) for including NCTIA on its work to modernize the ABC system this past short session.

