

Article 6.
Elections.

§ 18B-600. Places eligible to hold alcoholic beverage elections.

(a) Kinds of Elections. – The following kinds of alcoholic beverage elections shall be permitted:

- (1) Malt beverage;
- (2) Unfortified wine;
- (3) ABC store; and
- (4) Mixed beverage.

(a1) ABC Store Elections Requiring Merger. – A jurisdiction located in a county where an ABC board is already in operation may hold an ABC store election only if all of the following criteria are met:

- (1) The jurisdiction has negotiated the details of the merger required by G.S. 18B-700(c1) if the establishment of ABC stores is approved.
- (2) The details of the planned merger, including the distribution of profits, have been determined in accordance with G.S. 18B-703, and have been made available to all registered voters in the jurisdiction where the ABC store election is to be held.

(b) County Elections. – Any county may hold a malt beverage, unfortified wine, or ABC store election. A county may hold a mixed beverage election only if the county already operates at least one county ABC store or a county election on ABC stores is to be held at the same time as the mixed beverage election.

(c) City Malt Beverage and Unfortified Wine Elections. – A city may hold a malt beverage or unfortified wine election only if the county in which the city is located has already held such an election, the vote in the last county election was against the sale of that kind of alcoholic beverage, and one or more of the following apply:

- (1) The city has a population of 500 or more according to the most recent federal decennial census.
- (2) The city operates an ABC store.
- (3) The city has a population of 400 or more but less than 500 according to the most recent federal decennial census and had a population of 500 or more according to the prior federal decennial census.

(c1) Certain City Malt Beverage and Unfortified Wine Elections. – A city may hold a malt beverage or unfortified wine election only if all of the following criteria are met:

- (1) The county in which more than fifty percent (50%) of the area of the primary corporate limits of the city is located has already held such an election, and the vote in the last county election was against the sale of that kind of alcoholic beverage.
- (2) The city has a population of 200 or more.
- (3) The county in which more than fifty percent (50%) of the area of the primary corporate limits of the city is located also contains three or more other cities that have previously voted to allow malt beverage or unfortified wine sales.

(d) City ABC Store Elections. – A city may hold an ABC store election only if all of the following criteria are met:

- (1) The city has at least 1,000 registered voters.
- (2) The county in which the city is located does not operate ABC stores.
- (3) At least one other city in the same county operates an ABC store.

(e) City Mixed Beverage Elections. – A city may hold a mixed beverage election if the city has at least 500 registered voters. Provided, that if a city that qualifies for an election under this subsection approves the sale of mixed beverages, mixed beverages permittees in the city may

purchase liquor from the ABC store designated by the local ABC board that has been approved by the Commission for this purpose.

(e1) Small City Mixed Beverage Elections. – A city may also hold a mixed beverage election if the city has at least 300 registered voters and is located in a county with at least one other city that has approved the sale of mixed beverages. Provided, that if a city that qualifies for an election under this subsection approves the sale of mixed beverages, mixed beverages permittees in the smaller city may purchase liquor from the ABC store designated by any local ABC board in any other city that has approved the sale of mixed beverages.

This subsection shall not apply to Alamance, Avery, Burke, Caldwell, Carteret, Cleveland, Henderson, Onslow, Polk, Robeson, Rowan, Rutherford, and Wilkes Counties.

(e2) Ski Resorts ABC Elections. – Notwithstanding any other provisions of this section, any city that provides governmental services to as many as 1,000 snow skiers weekly during the normal ski season from December 1 through March 15, may hold an election authorized by subdivision (a)(1), (2), or (4) of this section. If the sale of mixed beverages is approved, the sales of liquor shall be made by any local board designated by the State ABC Commission.

(e3) Small Town Mixed Beverage Elections. – A town may hold a mixed beverage election if the town (i) has at least 200 registered voters, is located in a county bordering the Neuse River and Pamlico Sound that has not approved the sale of mixed beverages, and that county has only one city that has approved the sale of mixed beverages or (ii) has at least 200 registered voters, has a total area of less than 1 square mile, operates an ABC store, and is located in a county that has at least three cities that have approved the sale of mixed beverages. Provided, that if a town that qualifies for an election under this subsection approves the sale of mixed beverages, mixed beverages permittees in the town may purchase liquor from the ABC store designated by any local ABC board in any other city that has approved the sale of mixed beverages.

(e4) Multicounty/City ABC Elections. – If a city is located in two or more counties, the following provisions shall apply:

- (1) The city may hold a malt beverage or unfortified wine election if any county in which a portion of the city is located has already held such an election, the vote in the last election of the particular type was against the sale of that type of alcoholic beverage, and the city has a population of 500 or more.
- (2) The city may hold a mixed beverage election if the city has at least 500 registered voters and a county in which a portion of the city is located operates ABC stores, or a municipality in either county in which the city is located operates an ABC store.
- (3) If an election is held by a city under this subsection, all of the city voters may vote in the election. If the vote is for approval, alcoholic beverages may be sold on the basis of that approval and under the provisions of this Chapter. If the sale of mixed beverages is approved, the mixed beverage permittees shall purchase their liquor from one or more ABC stores located within the city that have been designated by the local boards for those purchases. The remaining gross receipts shall be distributed in accordance with existing law applicable to those ABC stores, except that after the applicable distributions have been made pursuant to G.S. 18B-805(b), (c), and (d), the local share of the mixed beverages surcharge and the guest room cabinet surcharge required by G.S. 18B-804(b)(8) and (9) shall be distributed one-half to the general fund of the city where the mixed beverage permittees are located and one-half to the local ABC boards from whose stores liquor is purchased.

(e5) Small Resort Town ABC Elections. – A town may hold a mixed beverage election if it:

- (1) Was incorporated after 1990 and prior to the effective date of this subsection;

- (2) Has at least 100 residents;
- (3) Is located in a county that borders another state and that has two other municipalities which have ABC stores; and
- (4) At the time of the election, has corporate boundaries that border or include land in three counties.

Provided, that if a town that qualifies for an election under this subsection approves the sale of mixed beverages, mixed beverages permittees in the town may purchase liquor from the ABC store designated by any local ABC board in any other city that has approved the sale of mixed beverages.

(f) Township Elections. – An election may be called on any of the propositions listed in G.S. 18B-602 in any township located within:

- (1) A county where ABC stores have heretofore been established by petition pursuant to law.
- (2) A county where ABC stores have been established pursuant to law, in which county according to data from the North Carolina Department of Commerce: (i) one-third or more of the employment is travel related, (ii) spending on travel exceeds four hundred million dollars (\$400,000,000) per year, and where the entirety of two townships consists of one island (and several smaller islands not making up more than one percent (1%) of the total land area of the two townships) where that island:
 - a. Has a population of 4,000 or over according to the most recent decennial federal census;
 - b. Is located with one side facing the ocean and another side facing a coastal sound.
- (3) Repealed by Session Laws 2004-203, s. 24, effective August 17, 2004.

An election may be called on any of the propositions listed in G.S. 18B-602(a), (d), and (h) in any township located within a county where the population of all cities in the county that have previously approved the sale of any kind of alcoholic beverages comprises more than twenty percent (20%) of the total county population as of the most recent federal census. In the case of subdivision (2) of this section, an election may be called in the two townships voting together on the proposition contained in G.S. 18B-602(h).

The election shall be held by the county board of elections upon request of the county board of commissioners or upon petition of twenty-five percent (25%) of the registered voters of the township, or in the case of subdivision (2) of this section, of the two townships taken together. The election shall be conducted and the results determined in the same manner as county elections held under this Article. For purposes of this Article, townships holding any election under this subsection shall be treated on the same basis as counties, and municipalities located within those townships shall be treated on the same basis as cities. In the case of an election under subdivision (2) of this subsection, the votes of the two townships counted together shall determine the result of the election.

For purposes of this subsection, the name and boundary of a township is as it is shown on the Redistricting Census 2000 TIGER Files with modifications made by the Legislative Services Office on its computer database as of May 1, 2001.

In any township election held under this subsection, the area within any incorporated municipality is excluded, and no permits may be issued under this subsection in any excluded area.

In order for an establishment to qualify for a permit under this subsection, the establishment's gross receipts from food and nonalcoholic beverages shall be greater than its gross receipts from alcoholic beverages.

(g) Beautification District Elections. – In a county where ABC stores have been approved by an election and a beautification district has been created after May, 1984, and prior to June 30, 1990, an election authorized by subsection (a) of this section may be called in the beautification district. The election shall be called in accordance with G.S. 18B-601(b), conducted, and the results determined in the same manner as county elections held under this Article. For purposes of this Article, beautification districts holding any election shall be treated on the same basis as counties, and municipalities located within those beautification districts shall be treated on the same basis as cities.

(h) Railroad Passenger Terminus Location Elections. – Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any city or town that is the passenger terminus of a rail line that carries at least 60,000 passengers annually may hold an election authorized by subdivisions (a)(1) and (a)(2) of this section. Any election held under this subsection shall be for the on-premises sale of malt beverages and the on-premises sale of unfortified wine pursuant to G.S. 18B-602(a)(2) and G.S. 18B-602(d)(2). (1937, c. 49, ss. 25, 26; c. 431; 1947, c. 1084, ss. 1, 2, 4; 1951, c. 999, ss. 1, 2; 1957, c. 816; 1963, c. 265, ss. 1-3; 1965, c. 506; 1969, c. 647, s. 1; 1971, c. 872, s. 1; 1973, cc. 32, 33; 1977, c. 149, s. 1; c. 182, s. 2; 1977, 2nd Sess., c. 1138, s. 15; 1979, c. 140, ss. 2, 3; c. 609, s. 1; c. 683, s. 13; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1174; 1981, c. 412, s. 2; c. 747, s. 49; 1983, c. 113, s. 1; 1983, c. 457, s. 2; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 919, s. 1; 1987, c. 766; 1989, c. 77; c. 400, s. 6; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 976, s. 1; 1993, c. 193, s. 1; 1995, c. 148, s. 1; 2001-515, s. 4; 2003-218, s. 1; 2004-203, s. 24; 2005-336, s. 1; 2007-386, s. 1; 2010-122, ss. 7(b), 8; 2015-103, s. 7; 2018-28, s. 1; 2018-65, s. 3; 2019-182, s. 16(a); 2021-150, s. 14.1; 2022-44, s. 3(k).)