
THIRD READING

Bill No: AB 2751
Author: Alvarez (D)
Amended: 4/16/26 in Assembly
Vote: 21

SENATE GOVERNMENTAL ORG. COMMITTEE: 13-0, 6/9/26

AYES: Rubio, Valladares, Archuleta, Ashby, Blakespear, Cervantes, Dahle,
Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Richardson, Smallwood-Cuevas, Wahab, Weber Pierson

NO VOTE RECORDED: Alvarado-Gil, Hurtado

SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE: Senate Rule 28.8

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0, 5/14/26 - See last page for vote

SUBJECT: Alcoholic beverages: imports: personal or household use:
reasonable amounts

SOURCE: Author

DIGEST: This bill revises the amount of alcohol an individual may bring into California for personal or household use. This bill establishes a uniform limit of six liters (eight standard bottles) of alcohol per 31-days for individuals crossing the U.S.-Mexico border into California on foot or via personal vehicle.

ANALYSIS:

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) and grants it exclusive authority to administer the provisions of the ABC Act in accordance with laws enacted by the Legislature. This involves licensing individuals and businesses associated with the manufacture, importation, and sale of alcoholic beverages in this state and the collection of license fees.

- 2) Makes it unlawful for any person other than a licensee to sell, manufacture, or import alcoholic beverages in this state, with exceptions.
- 3) Imposes restrictions on the means, by which alcoholic beverages are imported into the state for delivery or use within the state, as provided, and provides exceptions to these restrictions for specified amounts of alcoholic beverages brought into the state for personal or household use, as specified.
- 4) Provides an exception to the importation restrictions that allows an adult to bring a reasonable amount of alcoholic beverages into this state from outside of the United States for personal and household use.
- 5) Restricts a California resident returning to the United States by a vehicle that is not a common carrier, or any adult entering the United States as a pedestrian, to the amount of alcoholic beverages that is exempt from the payment of duty in accordance with existing provisions of federal law.

This bill:

- 1) Establishes a uniform limit of six liters of alcohol (eight standard bottles) per every 31-days for individuals crossing the U.S. border into California on foot or via personal vehicle.
- 2) Makes other technical changes.

Background

Author Statement. According to the author's office, "this bill is about fairness. If you fly into San Diego or arrive by cruise ship, you can bring home a reasonable amount of wine or spirits from Baja California, but if you cross at San Ysidro or Otay Mesa, those same rules do not apply. The bill aligns California's personal use import limits from Mexico with those of other states like Texas, allowing residents to bring back up to six liters of alcohol for personal consumption. These changes support cross border commerce, promote tourism, and foster the binational relationship with Mexico while maintaining public safety through clear, enforceable standards."

Federal Regulations. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) permits individuals, age 21 and older returning from abroad, to bring back one liter of alcohol duty-free, provided the alcohol is for personal use and its importation

complies with laws of the destination state. Amounts exceeding this one-liter exemption may be brought back but will be subject to applicable customs and federal Internal Revenue Tax.

While federal law does not set a firm limit on how much alcohol an individual may import for personal use, unusually large quantities may draw scrutiny from CBP, who are authorized to determine on the spot whether an importation appears to be for commercial rather than personal purposes. If a commercial intent is suspected, the traveler may be required to obtain an import permit and complete a formal customs entry before the alcohol is released.

California Law. Individuals bringing alcohol into California for commercial or business purposes must hold a license issued by the Department of ABC. Those importing alcohol for personal or household use are not subject to this licensing requirement; however, the alcohol must accompany the traveler upon entry and cannot be shipped separately into the state at a later date.

California law also establishes specific quantity limits for alcohol brought in from Mexico. Pedestrians crossing the border on foot, as well as California residents crossing in a personal vehicle, are limited to the federally exempt amount – currently one liter every 31 days. Non-California residents crossing in a personal vehicle may bring up to five cases (60 liters) for personal or household use. California residents and all other travelers crossing via common carrier – such as airline, railroad, or cruise line – are also permitted to bring up to five cases (60 liters) for personal use. These thresholds are established and enforced under a formal agreement between the Department of ABC and the CBP.

Other requirements and exemptions occur for new California residents, military personnel (relocating and non-relocating) and out-of-state residents traveling through California, and foreign diplomats.

This bill would increase the current limit on alcoholic beverages that may be brought across the U.S.-Mexico border— from one liter to six liters every 31 days — for individuals entering by personal vehicle and for all adults entering on foot. This bill also eliminates the existing residency distinction, applying the six-liter limit uniformly to all adults regardless of state of residence. As a result, non-California residents crossing by personal vehicle would be subject to a stricter standard than is currently imposed.

It should be noted that the ABC does not maintain agents at the U.S.-Mexico border. Accordingly, enforcement of this limitation would fall primarily to the CBP.

Related/Prior Legislation

AB 840 (Dahle, Chapter 355, Statutes of 2019) authorizes the Department of ABC to create and issue a special on-sale general license to a person who owns or operates a facility that is partially located in the County of Placer and partially located in the County of Washoe, State of Nevada (Cal Neva Resort & Casino), as specified.

FISCAL EFFECT: Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, staff notes that the Department of ABC's activities are funded by regulatory and license fees and generally the department does not receive support from the General Fund. New legislative mandates, although modest in scope, may in totality create new cost pressures and impact the department's operating costs and future budget requests.

SUPPORT: (Verified 6/22/26)

Mexican-American Policy Alliance

OPPOSITION: (Verified 6/22/26)

None received

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT: According to the Mexican-American Policy Alliance, "this piece of legislation is especially important to the Cali-Baja region as this region holds a unique bond. In the San Diego-Tijuana/Calexico region, data collected on cross-border commuting shows about 34,800 people residing in Tijuana regularly commute to the U.S. for work while 13,200 people do the same in Mexicali. That's roughly more than 48,000 people who live in Mexico and cross regularly for the U.S. for work around those two cities alone. The relationship between California and Baja California is essential. Cross-border economic ties translate into real benefits for workers, businesses, and families on both sides."

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 76-0, 5/14/26

AYES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo,

Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

NO VOTE RECORDED: Arambula, Flora, Kalra, Celeste Rodriguez

Prepared by: Felipe Lopez / G.O. / (916) 651-1530
6/24/26 16:39:43

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