

Liquor Law

raise the bar

We work with a broad range of clients throughout Michigan to help them obtain, maintain and transfer liquor licenses and resolve alleged code violations and regulatory issues.

Our clients include entrepreneurs, individual and chain restaurants, retailers, breweries, distilleries, hotels, resorts, nonprofits, and a variety of hospitality establishments, in connection with both on-site and off-site sales.

As Michigan's leading law firm for banks and other financial institutions, we have particular expertise advising lenders on liquor licenses as they relate to the extension of loans to restaurant groups, hotels, retail chains, and a variety of other retail, hospitality, and manufacturing businesses.

Our nimble team of liquor law specialists collaborates frequently with members of Bodman's Corporate/M&A Group and Real Estate Group to address issues that arise in connection with the purchase or sale of existing businesses or the establishment of new businesses. We also have experience serving the unique needs of clients of our High Net Worth group in connection with their investments in hospitality businesses and in wineries, breweries, and distilleries.

SERVICES

- Obtaining licenses for newly establishing businesses
- Structuring and negotiating the transfer of existing licenses
- Advising on licensing issues that arise in connections with M&A or other corporate transactions
- Counseling nonprofits on obtaining special licenses for festivals, fundraisers and other charitable or community events
- Defending alleged code violations
- Advising on real property zoning and use restrictions
- Advising banks and other lenders on loans to liquor license holders
- Representing licensees in proceedings before the Michigan Liquor Control Commission, Michigan Tax Tribunal, and all other applicable regulatory agencies

REPRESENTATIVE MATTERS

- Advised a nonprofit organization on complex liquor license transfer issues involved in the sale of multimillion dollar conference center, hotel, and golf course complex.
- Advised a large commercial lender on liquor license assignment and related issues in connection with its extension of a construction and acquisition loan to a real estate developer secured by a resort hotel in Florida.
- Advised the buyer of an historic hotel on Mackinac Island, Michigan on the transfer of an existing liquor license.
- Advised the owners of a popular Ann Arbor-based brewery and affiliated businesses, including a restaurant group, on all liquor license transfer matters involved in the sale of the businesses to a private equity buyer.
- Advised multiple applicants who were initially denied liquor license transfers through successful appeals.
- Successfully defended existing liquor license holders at violation hearings.
- Advised numerous new product applicants through to successful new product listings with the Michigan Liquor Control Commissioner as wholesaler.
- Succeeded in receiving change of use local approval as a prerequisite to a liquor license transfer for multiple clients.
- Successfully navigated and defended out of state entities when faced with liquor control code violations and/or consumer protection act litigation.