Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Bill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bill Number:</th>
<th>SP Bill 4B</th>
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<td>Introduced on:</td>
<td>31 October 2011</td>
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<td>Introduced by:</td>
<td>Nicola Sturgeon MSP (Government Bill)</td>
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<td>Passed:</td>
<td>24 May 2012</td>
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<td>Royal Assent:</td>
<td>29 June 2012</td>
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Passage of the Bill

The Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 31 October 2011. The Health and Sport Committee, as lead committee, began taking stage 1 oral evidence on the general principles of the Bill on 10 January 2012. The stage 1 debate took place on 14 March 2012 and the Bill was passed following the stage 3 parliamentary debate on 24 May 2012.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The Bill sought to introduce a price at which a unit of alcohol could not be sold below, with the aim of reducing alcohol consumption and related harms.

Provisions of the Bill

Section 1 of the Bill sought to amend the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 to make it a mandatory licence condition that a unit of alcohol could not be sold under a certain price. The minimum price per unit was not specified in the Bill but will be specified through regulations. Alcohol prices will be calculated using the following formula:

Minimum Price per Unit x Strength of Alcohol x Volume in Litres

Section 2 of the Bill sought to remove section 1 of the Alcohol etc. (Scotland) Act 2010 which provides a ‘sunset clause’ relating to the original minimum pricing provision contained in the Bill which preceded that Act. This provision was mistakenly voted through during stage 3 of that Bill after the minimum
pricing section was removed. Therefore it is a sunset clause on a provision that does not exist. No similar sunset clause was included in this Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Bill, as introduced.

Parliamentary consideration

**Stage 1:** Stage 1 scrutiny of the Bill was undertaken by the Health and Sport Committee. The Committee report recommendations fell into four areas: evaluation, announcement of the minimum price, duration of the minimum pricing provisions (sunset clause) and EU law.

**Stage 2:** At stage 2, two amendments were agreed to. The first introduced a sunset clause whereby the minimum pricing provisions will cease to have effect after six years from when the provisions are fully in force. The second imposed a reporting requirement on Scottish Ministers to evaluate the impact of the minimum pricing provisions five years after they come into force.

Amendments not moved or not agreed to related to the calculation of the minimum price, recovery of windfall profits from retailers and the evaluation of minimum pricing and the provision of statistical information.

On 14 May 2012, the Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Cities Strategy announced that 50 pence per unit was the preferred minimum price for alcohol. This will be introduced through regulations.

**Stage 3:** The stage 3 debate took place on 24 May 2012. Amendments were lodged regarding:

- **Meaning of a “Unit”:** Dr Richard Simpson MSP lodged two amendments in relation the meaning of a “unit”. These amendments were disagreed to or not moved.

- **Recovery of increased revenue:** Dr Richard Simpson MSP lodged an amendment to introduce a scheme to recover windfall profits from retailers. This amendment was disagreed to.

- **Evaluation of operation and effect of minimum pricing:** Five amendments were lodged, three by Dr Richard Simpson MSP and two by Nicola Sturgeon MSP. The Scottish Government amendments, that permit the evaluation report to cover the effect of minimum pricing on specific groups, were agreed to. The amendments lodged by Dr Richard Simpson MSP were disagreed to, not moved or withdrawn.

The Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) (Scotland) Bill was passed after a division. The result of the division was: for 86, against 1, abstentions 32. The Bill received Royal Assent on 29 June 2012.

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