

In 1937, North Carolina joined what are now eighteen states and two counties in the state of Maryland that are considered “Control Jurisdictions” through the legislative establishment of the North Carolina ABC Commission. Control Jurisdictions manage distilled spirits (and in some instances beer and wine) through government agencies at the wholesale level. Some also have a sales agency relationship with designated outlets or exercise control through government-operated package stores. Control Jurisdictions represent roughly 28% of the nation’s population and account for approximately 25% of distilled spirit sales. Through their operation, Control Jurisdictions serve local citizens with broader and more flexible policy options for promoting moderate use of alcohol and reducing its abuse.

- North Carolina’s uniqueness is defined through a local-option Control Jurisdiction; allowing local residents to designate where profits from their ABC system will return in their community.
- Local communities vote to establish an ABC system and depending on whether established at a city/municipal or county level, the local government appoints citizens to serve on a Board as Directors—Mecklenburg voted to establish in 1947
- According to NCGS 18B-701, the powers of local ABC Boards are to buy, sell, transport, and possess alcoholic beverages as necessary to operate ABC stores, adopt rules for the local ABC system subject to approval of the North Carolina ABC Commission, maintain employees for the ABC system, establish and determine responsibilities for a manager of the ABC system, have appropriate employees bonded as required by the North Carolina ABC Commission, employ or provide for enforcement of ABC laws, and other responsibilities relating to property and finances.
- ABC systems are self supporting—and return their profits back into the communities where they operate—Mecklenburg Board has returned \$171,865,901 to the County, City of Charlotte, and the Public Library since 1947.
- Local citizens have benefitted from \$51,661,014 since 1947 in substance abuse services and \$29,273,064 in law enforcement services.
- The State of North Carolina benefits from local systems through taxes imposed on spirits as part of the product price and through sales tax. Since 1947, the Mecklenburg County ABC Board has paid \$388,310,682 in taxes to the State of North Carolina.
- In contrast to license or “open states”, there are fewer retailers of distilled spirits in Control Jurisdictions; making application and enforcement of ABC laws easier and uniform.

Operation of a local ABC system is a delicate balance of right and responsibility. For those over the age of 21 who choose to consume alcohol, a legal provision is made to balance their choice with protection of the public. Through regulation and control that maximizes profit distribution to the community, our ABC system is truly “sui generis”—i.e. in a class of its own.