

Communication from Public

Name: Eddie Navarrette
Date Submitted: 01/16/2022 09:41 AM
Council File No: 17-0981
Comments for Public Posting: See attached letter of support



Via Email

January 15, 2022

Planning and Land Use Management Committee

Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Chair

Councilmember Gilbert A. Cedillo

Councilmember Bob Blumenfield

Councilmember John S. Lee

Councilmember Monica Rodriguez

Re: Restaurant Beverage Program ([CF: 17-0981](#))

Dear Planning and Land Use Management Committee Chair Marqueece Harris-Dawson and Committee Members:

The Independent Hospitality Coalition (IHC) represents over 1200 members made up of local food service business operators and employees within the Los Angeles area. We were created to provide a voice and representation for our workforce and essential businesses that are engrained in Los Angeles' local economy.

We are writing in our continued support of Item 9 ([CF: 17-0981](#)) on the agenda for your meeting on Tuesday, January 18th, that would establish a Restaurant Beverage Program (RBP), an administrative process for the onsite consumption of alcohol incidental to a restaurant, subject to a set of eligibility criteria, performance standards, and enforcement procedures. The creation of RBP would help businesses who need it most – the small restaurant businesses that cannot afford a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) – both the extreme financial burden and lengthy time historically associated with the CUP process, typically requiring the hiring of an expeditor to navigate the cumbersome process (average \$27,000 and 12-18 months).

Last month's LADCP December 2021 fee increase for a CUP to allow alcohol in conjunction with a restaurant has risen to \$18,000, plus notification and expeditor fees. It is simply unaffordable for most local small businesses – and most business owners give up on this opportunity to maximize their revenue deeming it impossible. These types of challenges hurt are most underprivileged small businessperson who simply cannot compete with a more well-funded restaurant group to provide a common amenity such as alcohol with dinner service. IHC believes it is critical for the City to simplify the permitting process for restaurants. Not only is the process expensive, but also extremely lengthy – taking nearly two years to get planning authorization for an alcohol license. The proposed program is a great solution that will help restaurants obtain an alcohol license while still ensuring restaurants abide by the City's rules and help keep our communities safe.

Cities such as Santa Monica, Burbank, Pasadena, and Beverly Hills **already allow** template approvals for restaurants who wish to serve alcohol. These template approvals have not

increased the detriment to quality of life by removing this area of authority. Los Angeles needs to be part of their efforts to make the City a more business-friendly economy, especially for small businesses who are trying to survive the pandemic.

Additionally, Covid impacts on job loss are inclusive of city staff processing these types of applications. City budget cuts have forced several community development staff members into early retirement and work furloughs. We need to consider new ways to make our great city work better and more efficient. We must be the example in executing a more sustainable future. Based on city data, over 90% of CUBs for restaurants are already approved with many of the template conditions proposed by this ordinance. Let's prioritize city staff for the rebuilding and bettering of Los Angeles rather than processing applications approved so often. Let's prioritize our small business community, sustainably.

We want to thank both the EDJ and PLUM committees for their hard work on crafting an RBP that works for all our communities. The creation of two separate programs that a council office can choose by resolution: the Restaurant Beverage Program (RBP) and the Restaurant Beverage Program Sensitive Use Zone. We do not agree with the RBP Sensitive Use Zone alternative however we feel it is a fair compromise to let the council districts decide on what may be best for their communities until at least the RBP proves its success. This ordinance will provide small businesses the opportunity to increase revenue that will help keep our restaurants open and viable, which supports jobs and brings economic vitality to the City. We truly appreciate your efforts to ensure we can continue to safely serve Los Angeles residents. We hope you will continue to recognize that and support the thousands of restaurants struggling to make it through this pandemic.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly at Eddie Navarrette 213-545-2620.

Thank you,



Eddie Navarrette
IHC Advocacy Committee Chair
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About IHC

The Independent Hospitality Coalition (IHC) is a coalition of California hospitality workers whose purpose is to provide representation for our growing workforce and essential businesses, creating awareness of our role in the economic fabric of society. Our mission is to have a seat at the table to help shape policy and legitimize our crucial impact on communities and cities throughout California. More information can be found here: <https://www.independenthospitality.org/>