

Communication from Public

Name: Eddie Navarrette
Date Submitted: 11/18/2020 09:56 AM
Council File No: 17-0981
Comments for Public Posting: Please see attached letter.



Via Email

November 18, 2020

Planning and Land Use Management Committee

Councilmember Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Chair

Councilmember Bob Blumenfield

Councilmember Curren D. Price, Jr.

Councilmember Gilbert A. Cedillo

Councilmember John S. Lee

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

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

The Independent Hospitality Coalition (IHC) represents over 450 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 support of Item 12 ([CF: 17-0981](#)) on the agenda for your meeting on Thursday, November 19th that would establish a Restaurant Beverage Program, 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 a Restaurant Beverage Program (RBP) would help business who need it most, the small restaurant businesses that cannot afford a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) and the costs associate with the CUP process, as well as an expeditor to help them through the process.

Based on information from the California of Tax and Fee administration, restaurants generate \$5.7 billion per year in taxable sales within Los Angeles County, more than the auto industry. This is money that stays within our communities through jobs, local merchants, farmers, etc. Most restaurants throughout the City are locally owned and contribute to most community platforms, like kids' sports programs, religious institutions, and other charitable causes. Not only do restaurants provide taxes and financial support to the City and community, each restaurant employs a minimum of 30-50 employees, from dishwashers, to baristas, to line cooks, to chefs, to managers, and a majority of these jobs are held by minorities. Having an alcohol license can create 30-40% more revenue which will be used to help sustain these local jobs.

The restaurant industry has been decimated by the COVID-19 virus. The number of jobs expected to evaporate from the independent restaurant industry is astronomical

and will make a negative impact in the years ahead while the industry recovers from the devastating impacts on the virus. As independent small businesses, we don't have access to financing and funding for support like other large restaurants have the ability to do. Implementing a RBP will help these businesses hit the hardest by the pandemic by increasing their revenue from alcohol sales, which will help keep our doors open, which many of our fellow restaurateurs have already been forced to close.

A CUP for alcohol in conjunction with a restaurant should not cost \$15,000. It is unaffordable for small, local businesses and these restaurants lose out on the potential of revenue from alcohol sales. IHC believes it is critical for the City to simplify the permitting process for restaurants. Not only is the process expensive, but extremely lengthy, as it takes 2 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. We believe the 7 AM-11 PM hours limitation will help mitigate the misuse of restaurants as nightclubs and help address community concerns. The RBP should also include full liquor that would enable existing restaurants that wish to expand their premise or remodel their interior floor plan a license without be subjected to the \$15,000+ fee and years wait time.

Cities such as Santa Monica, Burbank, and Beverly Hills already allow streamlined approvals for restaurants who wish to serve alcohol. 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.

Based on our knowledge and experience of the industry, we would like to suggest a few changes that we hope will be considered in the final version of the ordinance:

- **Remove Sec. 2, 34(b)(1) that limits outdoor seating to 30% of the total seating area.**

To protect our patrons' health during the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants have turned to outdoor dining to safely serve residents while also allowing restaurants to have a source of income. Especially during COVID-19, restaurants are reliant on outdoor dining and removing this will continue to support these efforts. The City should allow more patio focused restaurant concepts as the Al Fresco program continues to grow.

- **Remove Sec. 2, 34(a)(3) which requires a 20 seat minimum for eligible restaurants.**

Removing this section allows flexibility for smaller creative concept restaurants that need this flexibility to open and operate. For example, the program should allow a seven seat sushi bar to be eligible for the ordinance.

Thank you for the hard work you and your staff have invested in this ordinance to consider a Restaurant Beverage Program. This ordinance provides 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 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 213-687-6963, ext. 101.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eddie Navarrette', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eddie Navarrette
IHC Advocacy Committee Chair
eddie@fedesignandconsulting.com

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/>

Communication from Public

Name: Westwood Village Improvement Association

Date Submitted: 11/18/2020 12:58 PM

Council File No: 17-0981

Comments for Public Posting: Honorable Committee Members; The Westwood Village Improvement Association (WVIA) is the non-profit management organization contracted by the City of Los Angeles to administer the Westwood Business Improvement District. We represent 70 unique property owners and over 2,000 businesses. The WVIA Board of Directors supports the Restaurant Beverage Program, (RBP) and also an enhanced version of the proposed RBP. The enhancement would extend beyond the RBP's proposed parameters and further benefit areas like business improvement districts where visitors have the expectation of entertainment and nightlife. These enhancements would include extended hours in which to sell alcohol, a removal of any limits on televisions and amusement games, and the approval of entertainment including dancing and live music. Other cities in Los Angeles County, including the City of Santa Monica, have recently amended their planning requirements in response to our current unprecedented crisis to permit exactly what the WVIA is proposing in the City of Los Angeles. Enacting these enhanced features in entertainment hubs in the city, with the same oversight, reporting and restrictions proposed in the RBP, will help save businesses thousands of dollars, will create jobs, and keep new businesses opening in our city. Thank you for considering this enhancement to the proposed program. Sincerely, Andrew Thomas Executive Director, WVIA



November 18, 2020

Los Angeles City Council
Planning and Land Use Management Committee
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

RE: Support for an Enhanced Restaurant Beverage Program in Business Improvement Districts

Honorable Committee Members;

The Westwood Village Improvement Association (WVIA) is the non-profit management organization contracted by the City of Los Angeles to administer the Westwood Business Improvement District. We represent 70 unique property owners and over 2,000 businesses.

The WVIA Board of Directors supports the Restaurant Beverage Program, (RBP) and also an enhanced version of the proposed RBP. The enhancement would extend beyond the RBP's proposed parameters and further benefit areas like business improvement districts where visitors have the expectation of entertainment and nightlife. These enhancements would include extended hours in which to sell alcohol, a removal of any limits on televisions and amusement games, and the approval of entertainment including dancing and live music.

Other cities in Los Angeles County, including the City of Santa Monica, have recently amended their planning requirements in response to our current unprecedented crisis to permit exactly what the WVIA is proposing in the City of Los Angeles. Enacting these enhanced features in entertainment hubs in the city, with the same oversight, reporting and restrictions proposed in the RBP, will help save businesses thousands of dollars, will create jobs, and keep new businesses opening in our city.

Thank you for considering this enhancement to the proposed program.

Sincerely,

Andrew Thomas
Executive Director, WVIA

Communication from Public

Name: Spencer Hillman

Date Submitted: 11/18/2020 02:44 PM

Council File No: 17-0981

Comments for Public Posting: I would like to voice my support for 17-0981, in order to lower barriers to entry for small businesses in LA.

Communication from Public

Name: Ferris Wehbe

Date Submitted: 11/18/2020 02:47 PM

Council File No: 17-0981

Comments for Public Posting: I support 17-0981, and believe it would help local business in Los Angeles.

Communication from Public

Name: Miki Jackson

Date Submitted: 11/18/2020 01:34 PM

Council File No: 17-0981

Comments for Public Posting: Miki Jackson for Housing is a Human Right/ AIDS Healthcare Foundation. Vote no on Item 12. The "ministerial" CUP approval process for alcohol violates the City Charter's requires that CUPs be heard by a decision maker with a right of appeal. How can a ministerial CUP approval which implies no discretion for the City official and no right of appeal meat those requirements. Thus, the entire proposal, which has been percolating for three years, simply is inconsistent with the Charter provision that was adopted in 1969 following a bribery scandal that sent a Councilman to jail. Does this sound familiar. Creating another faux CUP that showers approvals for alcohol sales all over the city is both of dubious legality and dangerous. There are foreseeable environmental impacts which must be dealt with. We hereby adopt all objections to this item.

Communication from Public

Name: Lauren Natoli

Date Submitted: 11/18/2020 04:10 PM

Council File No: 17-0981

Comments for Public Posting: Lauren Natoli from AIDS Healthcare Foundation. I object to this item and urge the Council to vote against it. Alcohol licenses must continue to go through the proper approvals without skirting regulations. Allowing liquor licenses to be dealt more freely endangers residents and must be looked at for environmental impacts, especially now that drinking and eating at restaurants has been relegated to being outdoor-only. I adopt all objections to this item.

Communication from Public

Name: Laurette Healey

Date Submitted: 11/18/2020 04:46 PM

Council File No: 17-0981

Comments for Public Posting: The approval of the Restaurant Beverage Program could not be better timed given the state of our current economy. A CUB permit granted through this program evens the playing field for smaller restaurants who desperately need to increase the scant revenues from food service. Additionally, the CUB permit is only the first step in the process of obtaining the right to serve alcoholic spirits at any location in Los Angeles. The State Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) is the state licensing bureau and the CUB permit holder must go through an extensive background check before the State will place a license at any location. New ABC licenses reinforce public safety provisions that will benefit the surrounding community, including LAPD surveillance cameras outside a licensed establishment, additional lighting, and on-site security. In addition, employees must go through a STAR training program that educates front line hospitality workers on the various conditions associated with the service of alcohol to patrons. Many communities have found that the increased pedestrian activity around eateries also serving alcohol actually contributes to a decrease in crime in the immediate area. The emergence of rideshare options provides an excellent transportation option for patrons who may enjoy alcoholic beverages with their meals and do not wish to drive. I strongly support the passage of this ordinance. Thank You, Laurette Healey, Principal City Land Use, Inc.