

Communication from Public

Name: Eddie Navarrette
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Council File No: 20-1074-S6
Comments for Public Posting: See Attached Letter of Support



Independent Hospitality Coalition

Via Email

July 15th, 2024

Trade Travel and Tourism Committee

Councilmember Traci Park, Chair

Councilmember Tim Mcosker

Councilmember Hugo Soto-Martinez

Re: Support for 20-1074-S6 Al Fresco Deadline / Enrollment Barriers

Dear Committee Chair Traci Park and Committee Members,

We are writing in support of [CF 20-1074-S6](#) to instruct departments to report back on finding pathways to **push back the current July 31st deadline** and to make the program more accessible to our small business community. We have listed reasons why below:

- **Pushing back the July 31st deadline-** Programs for both outdoor dining on private property through LADBS and outdoor dining curbside or on-street were launched February 1st this year. The current deadline requires businesses to complete permitting through these newly developed programs within that 6 month timeline. This has become an entirely impossible burden for a community undergoing [massive closures](#) struggling with our current local economic and environmental conditions. There has been a large challenge for businesses to find/hire professionals to gain approval for a newly developed process in which very little training to departments was given. **As of the first week of July, 2024, only 1 permit has been issued for outdoor dining on private property and 0 issued for on street or curbside outdoor dining.**
- **Revisiting fees charged for outdoor dining-** To have outdoor dining, a business must pay a one time sewer facility charge of \$138-165 per seat in addition to other processing fees that range from \$149-3,500 on top of paying professionals thousands of dollars to provide plans and expediting just to have outdoor seating that may not exist next week. These are the same fees a permanent facility indoors would have to pay when these outdoor dining areas are limited to seasons, and as mentioned, environmental conditions. Businesses in the City of Los Angeles

already pay Wastewater fees assessed per usage on their DWP bills that are set to [double](#) over the next four years. Usage is a much more adequate way to charge users opposed to arbitrary fees used for primarily permanent facilities.

- **Identify ways to make the process more accessible-** Current department programs for outdoor dining lack community engagement. Recent 1 hour webinars only dictate the process and answer questions within a short period of time. These types of meetings give no time for the community to engage with departments on how policies are applied to the various site conditions that exist within the 502 square miles of the Los Angeles landscape. We recommend collaboration with industry professionals on where exceptions can be applied and where certain procedures can be eliminated. This will save money/time for both the city and the community it is serving.
- **Identify ways to support the transition-** Pathways like the new LADBS [Fast Track](#) permit process launched earlier this month is a great example of how we can make it easier for businesses and city staff. We should grow from this program by finding ways to make things easier for ALL businesses. Currently, many businesses view the program ‘as is’ to be impossible and are moving towards terminating their outdoor dining programs. Unfortunately, the Fast Track program was launched just this month and gives little to no time for businesses to utilize under the current July 31st deadline.
- **More department efficiency in the program -** By eliminating processes and creating transparent interpretations of how to apply code, we can become more efficient. Applying a different lens by working with industry professionals will allow collaboration on how we can tackle policy issues.

We hope you will understand and take into account we are in a local economic emergency crisis. With increases in retail street crime, 2023 labor strike impacts, increased costs of goods, California having the highest gas prices in the nation, and our unhoused crises; we urge you to not let red tape get in the way of opportunities for our small business community. We are injured and struggling. We are not doing okay. We need your leadership in moving policy forward for us – not only to survive – but to grow.

Thank you for hearing our voice. We look forward to building a more sustainable hospitality community together: doing more with less. We truly appreciate your efforts to ensure we can continue to safely serve Los Angeles residents. We hope you will continue to recognize our role in communities and support the thousands of restaurants struggling to make it through these most challenging times.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eddie Navarrette', with a vertical line extending downwards from the end of the signature.

Eddie Navarrette
IHC Executive Director
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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/>