



April 19, 2021

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, Majority Whip
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 4117
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 61 (Gabriel): Outdoor dining: temporary regulatory modification - **SUPPORT**

Dear Majority Whip Gabriel,

On behalf of our 1,300 small business members in San Diego, we are pleased to share our support for your AB 61. This bill supports restaurants impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic by providing temporary regulatory flexibility to help facilitate outdoor dining, and take-out and delivery options in a manner consistent with public health guidance.

AB 61 will help facilitate the long road ahead for the state's restaurant recovery by building on local programs such as the City of San Jose's "Al Fresco" plan, Sacramento's "Farm to Fork Al Fresco", Long Beach's "Open Streets Initiative", San Diego's "Slow Streets Program", and Los Angeles's "L.A. Al Fresco Program to expand outdoor dining opportunities statewide.

As we continue to reopen across the state, outdoor dining will be vital for any hope of statewide restaurant recovery. AB 61 will help community restaurants in the following ways:

- Ensuring restaurants statewide can take advantage of outdoor dining expansion opportunities;
- Extending the ABC's regulatory relief, allowing expanded outdoor alcohol service and outdoor alcohol-to-go sales;
- Allowing ABC to develop a licensing process to regulate third-party delivery services of alcohol, providing greater protections for safe alcohol delivery;
- Relaxing regulatory hurdles to allow coffee bars to be set up and operate outdoors; and
- Modernizing the current California retail food code requirement that requires the full enclosure of restaurant prep areas during operating hours. This temporary relief would create more opportunities for operators to open dining rooms for airflow and add takeout stations.

AB 61 contains some of the most successful elements of emergency pandemic relief and expands them for one year after the COVID-19 state of emergency is lifted. We know that expanded outdoor dining will continue to be critical for so many community restaurants, as they are forced to continue to fight for their economic survival.



AB 61 paves the way for a restaurant recovery and we strongly support your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Nicholls", is written over a light gray background.

Benjamin Nicholls
Executive Director

Copy: Assemblymember Christopher Ward
Michael Trimble, Executive Director, Gaslamp Quarter Association
Angela Landsberg, Executive Director, North Park Mainstreet Association