



April 8, 2024

The Honorable Scott Wiener  
State Senate  
1021 O Street, Suite 8620  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SUPPORT: SB 969 re: Entertainment Zones**

Dear Senator Wiener:

On behalf of the City of Santa Rosa, I write in strong support of your bill SB 969. This measure would allow local jurisdictions to create designated outdoor “entertainment zones” that will enable local brick and mortar bars and restaurants to sell takeout alcoholic beverages to patrons for consumption at street fairs, outdoor festivals, and other activations.

NATALIE ROGERS  
Mayor

MARK STAPP  
Vice Mayor

SB 969 will aid the recovery of downtown small businesses by removing barriers to brick and mortar businesses participating in nearby outdoor events, like street fairs and festivals. The City of Santa Rosa has a growing downtown with a courthouse square at the center of our downtown core. This square is a community meeting location where numerous local events and gatherings are hosted each year. SB 969 would enable local restaurants in downtown Santa Rosa to participate more fully in events in the square.

EDDIE ALVAREZ  
VICTORIA FLEMING  
DIANNA MACDONALD  
JEFF OKREPKIE  
CHRIS ROGERS

SB 969 will allow municipalities to create entertainment zones that allow neighborhood businesses – which are currently barred from selling alcoholic beverages to-go during festivals – to participate on equal footing with outside vendors and to engage in new types of events structured around “entertainment zones”.

Even as we emerge the pandemic, bars and restaurants continue to struggle from reduced patronage and slow business. In an attempt to drive traffic to these onsite brick and mortar businesses, some fairs and festivals are now foregoing traditional vendor-driven alcohol sales. The creation of “entertainment zones” would be an effort to extend the areas where brick and mortar shops can sell alcoholic beverages and in turn bolster their businesses.

A recent study from UC Berkeley highlights the issues that downtown districts are facing. Places of interest like businesses, shops, restaurants, parks, community centers, and stadiums are seeing less activity from remote work and empty offices are creating vacuums in urban spaces. In order to survive, cities need to create downtown spaces that increase economic activity.



Brick and mortar shops have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic with these shops seeing a record number of bankruptcies, vacancies, and store closures. Furthermore, some of these businesses exist in open container zones, but current regulations prohibit them from selling alcohol in outdoor zones, like fairs. Not allowing these businesses to sell alcohol at outdoor venues has hurt their ability to grow and recover financially. Traffic at these businesses is also not where it used to be, so owners are looking for any new opportunities to help stay afloat.

“Entertainment zones” will enhance the experience and business opportunities of customers and sellers at existing events while creating the opportunity for novel and exciting activations that will draw out clientele and foster community. Cities will be able to choose to tailor “entertainment zones” to the individual needs of each locale and event.

NATALIE ROGERS  
Mayor

The City of Santa Rosa lends our voice to the broad coalition supporting SB 969. Should you have any questions, please contact our legislative advocate Alyssa Silhi with Renne Public Policy Group at (916) 974-9270.

MARK STAPP  
Vice Mayor

EDDIE ALVAREZ Sincerely,

VICTORIA FLEMING  
DIANNA MACDONALD  
JEFF OKREPKIE  
CHRIS ROGERS

Natalie Rogers  
Mayor