



Rochester-Area Restaurants, State Restaurant Association Urge State Legislature to Include Alcohol-To-Go in 22-23FY Budget

Alcohol-to-go is a revenue raiser and should be included in the budget

March 23, 2022

ROCHESTER, NY – Today, Rochester-area restaurants and the New York State Restaurant Association (NYSRA) held an event at Salena’s Mexican Restaurant where they urged the State Legislature to include alcohol-to-go in the 22-23FY budget. The push comes during the final weeks of budget negotiations and following similar [events](#) throughout the State. Under New York’s state of emergency during the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants and bars were allowed to sell alcoholic beverages to-go. This permitted restaurants the ability to offer their full menu for take-out. However, once the emergency order ended, so did the policy allowing restaurants and bars to continue this needed and reliable revenue stream.

The event was attended by the operators of Rohrbach Brewing Company, The Mad Hatter Restaurant & Bakery, Flour City Station, Nox, Salena’s Mexican Restaurant, Marshall Street Bar & Grill and Union Tavern. They all stand behind Governor Hochul’s efforts to make it permanent and call for this wildly popular lifeline for restaurants to be included in the final budget, which must be approved by March 31, 2022.

“The buck stops with the legislature to provide New York restaurants with the recovery tools necessary to build back what was a thriving \$50 billion industry. We know there is broad support in both the Assembly and Senate, from Governor Hochul and from the public. It is clear that our industry has borne the brunt of economic hardships during the pandemic. Alcohol-to-go will aid the ongoing recovery and provide significant sales tax dollars to the state’s coffers. It must be included in the final state budget,” **said Melissa Fleischut, President and CEO of NYSRA.**

On March 16, 2020, New York State on PAUSE shuttered all restaurants for dining at the beginning of the pandemic. Under the emergency orders, liquor stores were deemed essential and permitted to stay open to the public. During this time, alcohol-to-go was in place for 15 months to mitigate the financial hardships felt throughout the industry.

The economic hardships of the pandemic caused many restaurants to permanently shut their doors or cut service hours, costing the state valuable sales tax revenue. Alcohol-to-go is a critical lifeline for restaurants to recoup sales and return to pre-pandemic



levels that provided \$4 billion in sales tax to the state, highlighting its direct impact on state revenue.

A [survey](#) conducted by the state association in May 2021 found more than 78% of New Yorkers support alcohol-to-go becoming permanent. The permanent inclusion of alcoholic beverages with takeout and delivery would allow for more restaurants to develop alcohol-to-go programs and encourage new restaurants to participate. According to a survey completed by the New York State Restaurant Association, 98% of restaurant operators that previously offered off-premises alcoholic beverages say they would resume offering this option if New York State made alcohol-to-go permanent.

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