



Reform on the Rocks: NJ's Struggle with Liquor Licenses

New Jersey's archaic liquor license laws are a hindrance to our small businesses, downtowns, and development and redevelopment opportunities. After decades of proposed liquor license reform floundering in the legislature, it gained renewed attention during COVID shutdowns, and more recently, the attention of Governor Murphy in his State of the State and Budget addresses. Join us for a discussion with leaders in the liquor license reform movement to hear about possible solutions to put our restaurant and craft manufacturing industries on par with neighboring states and the nation. There will be plenty of time for a roundtable discussion. We hope you will come prepared to share your own experiences so we can all learn from each other.

Speakers:

Luis De La Hoz, Chair, Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of NJ

Courtenay D. Mercer, PP, AICP, Executive Director, Downtown NJ

Eric Orlando, Executive Director, Brewers Guild of New Jersey

Anthony Pizzutillo, Partner, Pizzutillo Public Affairs

Ted Zangari, Esq., Member, Sills Cummis & Gross

Resources:

NJ Liquor License Reform Alliance: <https://www.downtownnj.com/liquor-reform/>

NJ Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control: <https://www.njoag.gov/about/divisions-and-offices/division-of-alcoholic-beverage-control-home/>

- Limited Brewery Special Ruling: https://www.nj.gov/oag/abc/downloads/Limited-Brewery_Special-Ruling.pdf
- Limited Brewery Special Conditions: <https://www.nj.gov/oag/abc/downloads/LimitedBrewerySpecialConditionsFinalText-6-30-22.pdf>

Pending Legislation:

<https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search>

A4630/S3038: Allows limited breweries to hold events and coordinate with certain food vendors. *(Reported out of Assembly Committee 5/25/23)*

A5461/S3833: Allows municipalities to transfer inactive alcoholic beverage retail licenses for use in redevelopment areas under certain circumstances; allows retail distribution and seasonal consumption licenses to be converted into consumption licenses. *(Reported out of Assembly Committee 5/25/23)*

A4251/S2901: Establishes special license to allow food and beverage establishments to sell alcoholic beverages in shopping malls. *(Reported out of Assembly Committee 5/25/23)*

A5270/S3675: Makes various revisions to alcoholic beverage licensing laws pertaining to certain retailers and manufacturers; provides tax credit under corporate business tax and gross income tax to certain retail licensees. *(Governor Murphy backed bill)*

A878/S350: Establishes restricted beer, wine, and cider license; provides tax credit under corporate business tax and gross income tax for loss in value to certain alcoholic beverage licenses.

A3709/S2622: Permits certain breweries, wineries, cideries, meaderies, and distilleries to sell each other's products on licensed premises.

A4764/S2951: Allows wineries to obtain brewery-winery sublicense; establishes farm brewery license.

A5509: Allows municipalities to adopt ordinance to reduce population limit for certain alcoholic beverage retail consumption licenses.

A3150/S3158: Permits issuance of special license in certain municipalities with shopping malls.

A632/S1835: Provides for transfer and sale of inactive liquor licenses for use in qualifying smart growth municipalities.

A540/S1299: Concerns certain sales of alcoholic beverages at farm markets.

A5115: Permits municipalities to issue additional retail alcoholic beverage licenses regardless of population limitation.

A275: Permits sale of certain alcoholic beverages and related products at seasonal farm markets.

A3851: Establishes license allowing supermarkets to sell certain alcoholic beverages manufactured in this State; designated as The Garden State Grocery Liquor Licensing Act.

A3840/S2347: Removes requirement that limited brewery licensees provide tour when selling beer to consumers and permits certain food consumption on premise.

A1813/S3038: Eliminates restriction on sale of beer by limited brewery licensee for on-premises consumption only when in connection with tour; requires licensee to provide tours during certain business hours.

A1005: Permits municipalities to issue retail liquor licenses for use in certain historic taverns.

The Liquor License Reform Alliance was formed to show broad and diverse support for changing New Jersey's archaic liquor license laws that are an impediment to many restaurants' ability to survive and thrive. The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated how important a liquor license can be for a restaurant's survival. The alliance is calling for reform to help our small businesses, promote equity, and enable New Jersey to better compete in the regional market. <https://www.downtownnj.com/liquor-reform/>