

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Making Outdoor Dining Permanent

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Law Allows Businesses to Continue Expanded Service

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed S3608/A4866 into law, making outdoor dining permissions permanent for restaurants and certain alcoholic beverage retailers and manufacturers. The permissions – initially established during the COVID-19 pandemic – were set to expire November 30, 2024, but will now be permanent, offering greater support to the food and beverage industry by facilitating opportunities to expand their licensed premises within designated outdoor space or on public sidewalk.

“Outdoor dining has proven to be an incredibly successful venture over the past four years, benefiting business owners and patrons alike,” **said Governor Murphy**. “I’m proud to continue this popular measure and look forward to seeing our restaurant industry continue to grow.”

“I’m pleased that both New Jersey residents and restaurants will be able to continue enjoying this option, which has a positive impact on our downtowns and enhances our communities,” **said Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin**. “I’d like to thank the bill’s sponsors as well as Governor Murphy for providing the state’s residents with as many choices as possible.”

“This permanent change to the state’s retail consumption segment of the alcoholic beverage industry is a commonsense approach to changing customer preferences,” **said Kirstin Krueger, Interim Director of the Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control**. “I’m gratified that the pivot we made in 2020 will remain, allowing our industry to stay resilient and keep thriving.”

“During the pandemic, outdoor dining was critical to allowing so many restaurants to stay open, keep employees on the payroll, and continue serving loyal customers. Though the pandemic is long behind us, outdoor dining will remain a staple in downtowns and main streets across the state thanks to the bill signed today by Governor Murphy, helping to revitalize communities by attracting more foot traffic, spurring economic activity, and bolstering small businesses,” **said Tim Sullivan, CEO of the Economic Development Authority**.

Today’s legislation will authorize continued use of fixtures such as tents, canopies, umbrellas, tables, and chairs for outdoor dining, making permanent [a law that was signed by the Governor](https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/S4000/3608_R2.PDF) (<https://nj.gov/governor/news/news/562021/approved/20210205a.shtml>) in February of 2021.

Under the new law, the holder of a temporary expansion permit issued by the New Jersey Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) may have their temporary permit converted to a permanent permit, which is renewable annually and is issued at the approval of local officials.

The primary sponsors of S3608/A4866 (https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/S4000/3608_R2.PDF) are Senator Paul A. Sarlo, Senator Vincent J. Polistina, Assemblyman Roy Freiman, Assemblywoman Mitchell Drulis, and Assemblywoman Barbara McCann Stamato.

“Outdoor service has proven to be a real success for restaurants and the communities they serve,” **said Senator Paul A. Sarlo, who serves as Mayor of Wood-Ridge.** “It is good for the economy, beneficial for downtown business districts and very popular with patrons and local residents. It is a success story that is well worth continuing.”

“New Jersey businesses benefited immensely from the innovative measures we adopted during COVID to enable the use of outdoor spaces,” **said Senator Vincent J. Polistina.** “By making the temporary outdoor dining and beverage laws permanent, our local businesses will continue to have the flexibility they need to thrive by maintaining the indoor and outdoor seating arrangements that patrons have come to enjoy. This is a big win for business, residents, and local economies.”

“Outdoor dining was a lifeline for restaurants and bars during COVID-19 and is a way to help them thrive in a post-pandemic world while fostering lively-community-centered outdoor spaces,” **said Assemblyman Roy Freiman.** “With the signing of Bill A4866 into law, we create a pathway for these entities to permanently offer outdoor dining, which will benefit patrons, establishment owners, and the economy as a whole.”

“This bill is a direct response to what our constituents have told us they want: more flexibility for business owners and more vibrant spaces to enjoy their favorite local businesses,” **said Assemblywoman Michelle Drulis.** “By cutting red tape and expanding these opportunities, we’re not just listening – we’re delivering, and I am proud to have gotten this done for the residents and restaurant owners in our district.”

“Hudson County embodies the diversity and vibrancy that makes New Jersey unique. By allowing restaurants to expand their outdoor dining options permanently, this legislation will provide critical support to local businesses, creating new opportunities for growth and connection,” **said Assemblywoman Barbara McCann Stamato.** “It’s not just about financial benefits—it’s about fostering community, enhancing the dining experience, and ensuring these establishments continue to thrive.”

“We commend Governor Murphy for extending the outdoor dining rules, a decision that provides critical support to our local restaurants, many of which are owned and operated by small business owners and entrepreneurs. This extension not only allows restaurants to thrive by offering expanded seating options but also plays a significant role in driving economic development across our towns. Outdoor dining has transformed our communities, creating vibrant, engaging environments that attract residents and visitors alike. The governor’s continued commitment to fostering small business success and enhancing our local economies is greatly appreciated, and we look forward to the positive impact this will have on businesses and communities statewide,” **said Michael Egenton, Executive Vice President – Government Relations, New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce.**

“Governor Murphy’s action on this bill is a welcome initiative that recognizes the transformative role outdoor dining plays in our downtowns,” **said Natalie Pineiro, Executive Director of Downtown New Jersey.** “Outdoor dining enhances the vibrancy of our communities, driving foot traffic, supporting small businesses, and contributing to the growth of local economies. This bill will ensure that downtowns across the state remain hubs of activity and innovation, benefiting both businesses and residents alike.”

“Governor Murphy’s decision to make expanded outdoor dining permanent builds on an initiative introduced during COVID-19, a period of immense challenge for businesses. What started as a lifeline for restaurants during COVID-19 has become a lasting solution that supports small businesses, enriches the dining experience and fosters stronger community connections,” **said Carlos Medina, President and CEO of the Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey (SHCCNJ).** “This policy represents a critical step in ensuring the resilience and growth of Latino-owned restaurants, which is vital to the small business ecosystem in New Jersey and the SHCCNJ community. It’s a pro-business, pro-community model of how innovative policies can transform adversity into enduring opportunities.”

“Since the COVID pandemic, New Jersey craft breweries have found outdoor seating options extremely popular among our customers. In an industry where it is paramount to provide its loyal patrons the hospitality experiences they desire, making outdoor seating areas a permanent option fits into this goal,” **said Scott Wells, Director of Sales at Bolero Snort Brewing Company in Carlstadt and Board Member of the Brewers Guild of New Jersey.** “Not only do these areas provide extra space to enjoy award-winning beers at their local brewery, but they give our partners in the restaurant and bar industry critical opportunities to serve their customers in safe, welcoming outdoor settings statewide.”

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