

WeHo Testifies in Support of Extended Bar Hours Bill, Which Is Put on Hold in State Legislature

Monday - April 16, 2018

The City of West Hollywood and the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce are among 26 registered supporters of a bill in the state legislature that would allow WeHo and five other California cities to extend alcohol serving hours to 4 a.m.

The bill, SB 905, was introduced by state Sen. Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco). If it gets through the legislature and is signed by the governor, West Hollywood and the five other cities would have to decide whether or not to extend drinking hours.



LBReport.com, a website that covers the news of Long Beach, reported today that the state Senate Appropriations Committee has moved the bill to its “suspense” file. That move means the bill will have to go for a vote before the committee before it can go for a vote by the entire state Senate. Committee Chair Ricardo Lara (D-Long Beach), a co-author of SB 905, is empowered to decide whether that committee vote will take place.

According to LBReport, representatives of the City of West Hollywood and the United Here Teamsters union spoke in favor of the bill at today’s Appropriations Committee meeting.

Speaking against it were representatives of the California Alcoholic Policy Alliance and Alcohol Justice, who argued that passage of the bill would mean an increase in cost to the state’s MedCal and state-covered ambulance costs because of “alcohol-related harm.”

SB 905 was introduced by Wiener in January. The other five cities it would affect are San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles, Sacramento and Long Beach. The City of Oakland is the only city other than the City of West Hollywood to have endorsed the bill. However, it also has been endorsed by the mayors of Sacramento, Long Beach and San Francisco, by other chambers of commerce and by hospitality organizations such as the California Hotel & Lodging Association.

The West Hollywood City Council endorsed an earlier and unsuccessful version of Wiener’s bill in April 2017 in a four to one vote, with Councilmember Lauren Meister voting against it. That bill would have allowed all California cities to extend their alcohol serving hours to 4 a.m.

West Hollywood’s Public Safety Commission took a stand against Wiener’s bill at its April 9 meeting by approving a motion introduced by Commissioner Robert Oliver. Capt. Sergio Aloma, head of the West Hollywood Sheriff’s Station, agreed with the commission’s decision.

“I don’t think that we should fool ourselves in thinking that local impact is going to be contained in the City of West Hollywood,” Aloma said. “Two hours of additional drinking certainly is going to have an impact on cities outside West Hollywood. I also think it’s going to impact our local trauma centers ... “We’re going to absolutely have to rethink our staffing model and our deployment of deputy service. At 4 a.m., we don’t have the same staffing we have at midnight or two a.m.”