



West Hollywood and Palm Springs Extend Last Call for Alcohol to 4 A.M.

Mona Holmes

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Legislation that permits seven California cities to extend nightlife operations to 4 a.m. has advanced in the state senate as of late June. Those cities include West Hollywood, Cathedral City, Palm Springs, and Coachella. And on Monday, June 27, WeHo's City Council followed up that approval by adding its own local measure in a 3-2 vote, making it possible to secure a cocktail beyond the traditional 2 a.m. in the standalone city in Los Angeles. The new laws have the potential to significantly shift California's club and bar culture as [Senate Bill 930](#) makes its final rounds in Sacramento.

Dubbed the late-night bar bill, SB 930 passed through the committee on June 22 and authorizes West Hollywood, Cathedral City, Palm Springs, Coachella, San Francisco, Oakland, and Fresno to participate in the pilot program. Locally, West Hollywood has one of the highest concentrations of bars and clubs in the region. Once approved, the law will transform the Sunset Strip, La Cienega between Santa Monica and Melrose, as well as the dense collection of queer clubs and bars on the stretch of Santa Monica Boulevard between San Vicente and Robertson.

Rideshare drivers and late-night food vendors and restaurants also stand to gain from the program.

California state senator Scott Wiener is a longtime champion of extending the last call for alcohol. Over the years, his attempts to pass legislation were met with frequent opposition, and the legislation failed to pass the Senate [in 2019](#). This recent push is different, as Wiener notes that SB 930 is designed to help businesses that struggled after COVID-19. “Many bars and venues are still facing mountains of debt as a result of the last few years,” said Senator Wiener in a statement via email. “Although we’re now in a very different phase of the pandemic and the bars that survived are open at full capacity, many of these small businesses are still struggling. We need to give them every possible tool to help them survive – including allowing them to stay open until 4 a.m. Nightlife is a core part of who we are as a state, and our world-class bars and nightclubs deserve a fighting chance.”

The bill isn’t without resistance, and still requires participating cities to work with law enforcement with safety training and additional transportation. A pilot city’s plans [must also be reviewed](#) by the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control. In addition to approving the late-night bar program, the same city council [voted yesterday in favor](#) of eliminating four Los Angeles County sheriff’s deputies over the next nine months. The West Hollywood [website](#) notes that each deputy will be removed gradually over the next six months, with the potential to remove more if the council agrees to do so. The deputies will be replaced by unarmed “security ambassadors.”

Industry watchdog group [Alcohol Justice](#) opposes the move, and executive director Cruz Avila stated that Wiener “has once again chosen nightlife over all life and industry profits over public health and safety,” citing concerns with public safety, increased drug use, and drunk drivers. SB 930 now heads to the Assembly Appropriations Committee. The bill expires in five years and at that point up for renewal or elimination.