

**Statement of the
Coalition for Responsible Alcohol Licensing
On Governor Murphy's "Stakeholder Roundtable" on Liquor License Reform**

The Coalition for Responsible Alcohol Licensing is pleased to hear Governor Murphy voice his support for small businesses. We would like to point out that New Jersey is home to nearly 7,500 small businesses who are also liquor license holders, most of whom are still trying to recover from the lockdowns and closures imposed upon them by COVID-19.

Coalition member Diane Weiss of the NJ Licensed Beverage Association states: "Unfortunately, the limited details that Governor Murphy has chosen to share about his plan to reform liquor licenses are disturbing to the tens of thousands of people who rely upon a liquor license to support their families."

The Coalition for Responsible Alcohol Licensing has been working to develop a plan that would satisfy the need for targeted alcohol license expansion and provide an avenue for disadvantaged license holders to establish new small businesses, all while preserving the value of the investments that New Jersey families have made in liquor licensed establishments over the past decades. The Governor's plan does not do this.

Coalition member Jeff Warsh, of the Wine and Spirits Wholesalers provides an alternative: "The following legislation would go far in addressing the foregoing goals: S-3474 (Singleton/Sarlo)/A-5127(Stanley/Atkins) encourage inactive licenses to be activated and transferred to municipalities where they are needed. A-3150(McKeon)/S-3158(Cryan/Codey) allows municipalities with shopping malls to replace licenses stuck in shopping malls with new licenses to be used where needed. Additionally, amending NJSA 33:1-24.3 to make existing Smart Growth Licenses easier to obtain would spur development. These three fixes alone would provide specific, targeted relief in areas that need the unique addition of a liquor licensed establishment."

Mike Halfacre, of the Beer Wholesalers Association of New Jersey, would like to work with Governor Murphy on solutions. "Unfortunately, many stakeholders were not invited to today's roundtable. In Trenton, if you're not at the table, it usually means you are on the menu. We are confident that Governor Murphy did not intend to ignore the thousands of bars, restaurants and tavern owners, many of them family owned for multiple generations, who rely upon current liquor licenses to provide jobs and a paycheck to their employees and them. We look forward to working with the Governor and to continue to work with the legislature to reach a fair solution.