

Sophie Hahn  
Councilmember District 5

CONSENT CALENDAR  
July 27, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Sophie Hahn

SUBJECT: Letter to Senators Feinstein and Padilla in Support of the Restaurant Revitalization Fund Replenishment Act

#### RECOMMENDATION

Send a letter, attached, to Senators Feinstein and Padilla in Support of the Restaurant Revitalization Fund Replenishment Act.

#### FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

No fiscal impacts.

#### CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

Locally owned restaurants are the lifeblood of our downtown and neighborhoods, provide vital economic and social resources for our community, and are an important part of our cultural and civic identity. But these important local businesses are struggling to recover from the impacts of Shelter-in-Place, including many facing debts, back rent, and other expenses.

#### BACKGROUND

The Restaurant Revitalization Fund, a Federal Program, was designed to provide desperately needed relief to restaurants, and initially prioritized applications from restaurants owned by women, veterans, and people of color. Due to lawsuits that halted implementation of the priority program, the SBA sent emails to 2,965 priority applicants rescinding their grants and ceased reviewing other priority applications. Women, veteran and of-color applicants were forced to re-apply, placing them at the end of the line. Because grants were made on a first-come, first-served basis, and funds were quickly exhausted, the effect has been to deny access to grants for restaurants owned by women, veterans and people of color – the opposite of the SBA's original intent. This is in and of itself a discriminatory outcome, and must be immediately redressed.

We are aware of at least one restaurant in Berkeley that applied in a timely manner under the priority program and was required to reapply, only to learn that funds had been exhausted before any formerly-priority applications were funded.

This resolution calls on Senators Feinstein and Padilla to support S.2091, the Restaurant Revitalization Fund Replenishment Act, which will provide significant

additional funding to the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, thereby making relief accessible to restaurants owned by women, people of color, and veterans.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Not applicable.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Our local restaurants owned by women, people of color, and veterans are in desperate need of relief and funds should be made available through the Restaurant Revitalization Fund to support their needs, rectifying a discriminatory outcome contrary to the original intent of the program. We need our Senators to support additional federal funds as quickly as possible.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

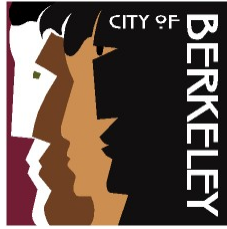
None.

CONTACT PERSON

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510-981-7150

Attachments:

1. Letter to Senators Feinstein and Padilla in Support of the Restaurant Revitalization Fund Replenishment Act



City Clerk Department

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Alex Padilla  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

**RE: S.2091 Restaurant Revitalization Fund Replenishment Act  
Support from the Berkeley City Council**

Dear Senators Feinstein and Padilla:

We, the Berkeley City Council, write to express our strong support for S.2091, the Restaurant Revitalization Fund Replenishment Act, (Sens. Wicker and Sinema.) This crucial legislation would provide an additional \$60 Billion in relief funds to our local restaurants struggling to recover from COVID-19 who were denied access to previous relief funds.

Our locally owned restaurants are the lifeblood of our downtown and neighborhoods, provide vital economic and social resources for our community, and are an important part of our cultural and civic identity. But these crucial local businesses are struggling to get by as diners are slow to return to in-person settings and many are facing debts, back rent, and other expenses from the pandemic.

This important program, designed to provide desperately needed relief, initially intended to prioritize restaurants owned by women, veterans, and people of color. Due to lawsuits that halted the implementation of the priority program, the SBA sent emails to 2,965 priority applicants rescinding their grants and ceased reviewing other priority applications. Women, veteran and minority applicants were forced to re-apply – placing them at the end of the line. Because grants were made on a first-come, first-served basis, and funds were quickly exhausted, the effect has been to deny access to grants for women, veteran and minority owned restaurants – the opposite of the SBA's original intent. This is in and of itself a discriminatory outcome, and must be immediately redressed.

We urge you to join the 37 members of California's Congressional Delegation, including Representative Barbara Lee, to support S.2091, the Restaurant Revitalization Fund Replenishment Act, and ask you to demonstrate your support by becoming co-sponsors.

Sincerely,

Berkeley City Council

CC: Speaker Nancy Pelosi  
Vice President Kamala Harris  
President Joe Biden