

Date of Hearing: April 21, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS
Marc Berman, Chair
AB 1915 (Gabriel) – As Amended March 23, 2026

NOTE: This bill is double referred and passed the Assembly Health Committee on April 14, 2026, on a 16-0-0 vote.

SUBJECT: Accelerated restaurant equipment permitting approval: retail food safety.

SUMMARY: Establishes a streamlined permit approval process and waives inspections for a like-for-like equipment installations at restaurants; requires the Building Standards Commission (CBSC) to adopt various building standards related to restrooms, drinking fountains, cooking equipment, and dishwashers; and makes various changes to the California Retail Food Code (CRFC) related to milk, non-continuous cooking, raw animal foods, handwashing sinks, refrigeration, grease traps and grease incinerators, and passthrough windows.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Establishes, until January 1, 2029, the Contractors State License Board (CSLB) under the Department of Consumer Affairs to implement and enforce the License Law, which includes the licensing and regulation of contractors and home improvement salespersons. (Business and Professions Code (BPC) §§ 7000 *et seq.*)
- 2) Exempts from the License Law a work or operation on one undertaking or project by one or more contracts if the aggregate price for labor, materials, and all other items is less than \$1,000 that work or operation being considered of casual, minor, or inconsequential nature, and the work or operation does not require a building permit. (BPC § 7048)
- 3) Authorizes the CSLB to issue licenses to individual owners, partnerships, corporations, and limited liability companies. (BPC § 7065(b))
- 4) Establishes the CBSC within the Department of General Services and requires the CBSC to administer the processes related to the adoption, approval, publication, and implementation of California's building codes, which serve as the basis for the design and construction of buildings in California. (Health & Safety Code (HSC) §§ 18901 *et seq.*)
- 5) Specifies that where no state agency has the authority to adopt building standards applicable to state buildings, the CBSC shall adopt, approve, codify, and publish building standards providing the minimum standards for the design and construction of state buildings, including buildings constructed by the Trustees of the California State University and, to the extent permitted by law, to buildings designed and constructed by the Regents of the University of California. (HSC § 18934.5)
- 6) Requires the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to administer the provisions of the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act, including the licensing of individuals and businesses in the manufacture, importation, and sale of alcoholic beverages. (BPC § 23000 *et seq.*)

- 7) Establishes the CRFC to provide for the regulation of retail food facilities. Establishes health and sanitation standards at the state level through the CRFC, while enforcement is charged to local agencies, carried out by the 58 county environmental health departments and four city environmental health departments (Berkeley, Long Beach, Pasadena, and Vernon). (HSC §§ 113700 *et seq.*)
- 8) Defines a “food facility” as an operation that stores, prepares, packages, serves, vends, or otherwise provides food for human consumption at the retail level. Excludes various entities from the definition of a “food facility,” including a cottage food operation, and a church, private club, or other nonprofit association that gives or sells food to its members and guests, and not to the general public, at an event that occurs no more than three days in any 90-day period. (HSC § 113789)
- 9) Establishes requirements for satellite food services, including requiring satellite food service only be operated by a fully enclosed permanent food facility that meets the requirements for food preparation and service and that is responsible for servicing the satellite food service operation; that the permit holder of the permanent food facility submit to the enforcement agency written standard operating procedures prior to conducting the service, as specified; that all food preparation be conducted within a food compartment or fully enclosed facility; and, that service areas have overhead protection that extends over all food handling areas. (HSC § 114067)
- 10) Defines “limited food preparation” to mean food preparation that is restricted to specified methods, including, among other things, cooking and seasoning to order, hot and cold handling of food that has been prepared at an approved permanent food facility, and reheating of food that has previously been prepared at an approved permanent food facility, as specified. Excludes from the definition the following, among other things: handling, manufacturing, processing or packaging of milk, milk products, or products resembling milk products as specified. (HSC § 113818)
- 11) Defines “warm water” to mean water that is supplied through a mixing valve or combination faucet at a temperature of at least 100°F. (HSC § 113941)
- 12) Requires handwashing facilities to be provided within or adjacent to toilet rooms in accordance with local building and plumbing codes. Requires food facilities that handle non-prepackaged food to provide handwashing facilities in food preparation areas and warewashing areas that are sufficient in number and conveniently located for use by food employees. Requires these handwashing facilities to be equipped with to provide warm water under pressure for a minimum of 15 seconds through a mixing valve or combination faucet. Requires, if the temperature of water provided to a handwashing sink is not readily adjustable at the faucet, the temperature of the water to be at least 100°F, but not greater than 108°F. Authorizes an automatic handwashing facility to be installed and used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. Authorizes the enforcement agency to allow handwashing facilities other than those required by this section when it deems that the alternate facilities are adequate. (HSC § 113953)
- 13) Requires a thermometer to be provided for each refrigeration unit. Requires the thermometer to be located to indicate the air temperature in the warmest part of the unit and, except for vending machines, to be affixed to be readily visible. (HSC § 114157)

- 14) Prohibits a grease trap or grease interceptor from being located in a food preparation or utensil handling area unless specifically approved by the enforcement agency. Requires grease traps and grease incinerators to be easily accessible for servicing. (HSC § 114201)
- 15) Limits passthrough window service openings to be limited to 216 square inches each. Prohibits service openings from being closer together than 18 inches. Requires each opening to be provided with a solid or screened window, equipped with a self-closing device. Requires screening to be at least 16 mesh per square inch. Approves passthrough windows of up to 432 square inches approved if equipped with an air curtain device. Requires the counter surface of the service openings to be smooth and easily cleanable. (HSC § 114259.2)
- 16) Requires the walls and ceilings of all rooms within permanent food facilities to be of a durable, smooth, nonabsorbent, and easily cleanable surface, except as specified. (HSC § 114271)
- 17) Requires temporary food facilities to be equipped with overhead protection for all food preparation, food storage, and warewashing areas. Requires overhead protection to be made of wood, canvas, or other materials that protect the facility from precipitation, dust, bird and insect droppings, and other contaminants. Requires temporary food facilities that handle nonprepackaged food to also protect food from contamination in one of the following ways:
 - a) Enclosure of the food facility with 16 mesh per square inch screens;
 - b) Limiting display and handling of nonprepackaged food in food compartments; or,
 - c) Other alternative, effective means approved by the enforcement officer.(HSC § 114349(a)-(b))
- 18) Exempts temporary food facilities that are approved for limited food preparation from the requirements above if flying insects, vermin, birds, and other pests are absent due to the location of the facility or other limiting conditions. (HSC § 114349(c))
- 19) Requires potentially hazardous food to be maintained at or above 135°F, or at or below 41°F, except during preparation, cooking, cooling, or transportation or from a food facility, or as otherwise specified. (HSC § 113996(a))
- 20) Authorizes potentially hazardous foods, as specified, to be held at or below 45°F (HSC § 113996(c))
- 21) Authorizes potentially hazardous foods held for dispensing in serving lines and salad bars to be maintained above 41°F, but not above 45°F, during periods not to exceed 12 hours in any 24-hour period only if the unused portions are disposed of at or before the end of this 24-hour period. Specifies that a display case is not a serving line. (HSC § 113996(d))
- 22) Requires, except as specified, if time only, rather than time in conjunction with temperature, is used as the public health control for a working supply of potentially hazardous food before cooking or for ready-to-eat potentially hazardous food that is displayed or held for service for immediate consumption, the following to occur:

- a) The food to be marked or otherwise identified to indicate the time that is four hours past the point in time when the food is removed from temperature control;
- b) The food to be cooked and served, served if ready-to-eat, or discarded within four hours from the point in time when the food is removed from temperature control;
- c) The food in unmarked containers or packages or marked to exceed a four-hour limit to be discarded; and,
- d) Written procedures to be maintained in the food facility and made available to the enforcement agency upon request for food that is prepared, cooked, and refrigerated before time is used as a public health control.

(HSC § 114000)

23) Requires, whenever food has been prepared or heated so that it becomes potentially hazardous, the food be rapidly cooled if not held at or above 135°F. Requires, after heating or hot holding, potentially hazardous food to be cooled rapidly from 135°F to 41°F or below within six hours and, during this time the decrease in temperature from 135°F to 70°F is required to occur within two hours. Requires potentially hazardous food to be cooled within four hours to 41°F or less if prepared from ingredients at ambient temperature, such as reconstituted foods and canned tuna. Requires, except for a specified exemption of pasteurized milk, raw shell eggs and unshucked live molluscan shellfish, a potentially hazardous food received in compliance with laws allowing a temperature above 41°F during shipment from the supplier to be cooled within four hours to 41°F or less. (HSC § 114002)

24) Requires, whenever food has been prepared or heated so that it becomes potentially hazardous, the food to be rapidly cooled if not held at or above 135°F. Requires, after heating or hot holding, potentially hazardous food to be cooled rapidly from 135°F to 41°F or below within six hours and, during this time the decrease in temperature from 135°F to 70°F is required to occur within two hours.

- a) Requires potentially hazardous food to be cooled within four hours to 41°F or less if prepared from ingredients at ambient temperature, such as reconstituted foods and canned tuna;
- b) Requires a potentially hazardous food received in compliance with laws allowing a temperature above 41°F during shipment from the supplier to be cooled within four hours to 41°F or less; and,
- c) Exempts pasteurized milk in original, sealed containers, pasteurized milk products in original, sealed containers, raw shell eggs, and unshucked live molluscan shellfish from the requirements of a) and b) above if these foods are placed, immediately upon their receipt, in refrigerated equipment that maintains an ambient temperature of 45°F or less.

(HSC § 114002)

25) Establishes specific requirements for the temperature and time for the cooking of raw animal foods such as eggs, fish, meat, poultry, and all foods containing these raw animal foods as specified. (HSC § 114004)

THIS BILL:

- 1) Defines “licensed commercial contractor” to mean a contractor licensed pursuant to the Business and Professions Code holding a valid and active license in good standing in the appropriate classification for the work performed.
- 2) Defines “like-for-like equipment installation” to mean the installation or replacement of commercial food service equipment that is substantially similar in size, function, and utility demand to existing approved equipment and does not do any of the following:
 - a) Change the use or occupancy classification of the building.
 - b) Alter structural or load-bearing elements.
 - c) Modify fire or life safety systems, except for direct connection to existing approved systems.
 - d) Increase approved utility capacity.
 - e) Require discretionary review.
- 3) Defines “qualified licensed contractor certifier” to mean a licensed commercial contractor who satisfies all the following:
 - a) Holds a valid license in good standing in the appropriate classification for the work performed.
 - b) Has not less than five years of experience performing commercial food service equipment installation or commercial restaurant construction experience.
 - c) Maintains commercial general liability insurance in an amount not less than \$2,000,000 per occurrence.
 - d) Is not subject to any current suspension, probation, or enforcement action by the CSLB.
- 4) Defines “restaurant” to mean a retail food establishment that prepares, serves, and vends food directly to the consumer and is not a fast food restaurant.
- 5) Requires, upon request of an applicant for a permit for a like-for-like equipment installation relating to a restaurant, a local building department to allow a qualified licensed contractor certifier to submit a certification of compliance with applicable codes.
- 6) Requires a certification submitted pursuant to this bill to satisfy the inspection requirement for the qualifying installation.
- 7) Provides that certification shall be at the applicant’s expense and does not exempt the project from permit requirements.
- 8) Requires a qualified licensed contractor certifier to submit an affidavit, under penalty of perjury, attesting to both of the following:

- a) The equipment installation complies with all applicable building, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, fire, and health and safety codes in effect at the time of installation.
 - b) The work performed is limited to a like-for-like equipment installation.
- 9) Requires the local building department to approve or deny a complete permit application within 10 business days of receipt.
 - 10) Specifies that if the local building department does not approve or deny the application within 10 business days of receipt, the permit shall be deemed approved for permitting purposes, provided all required fees have been paid.
 - 11) Makes a qualified licensed contractor certifier liable for damages arising from negligent or false certification under this bill.
 - 12) Requires the applicant to indemnify the local agency from property damage or personal injury arising from construction performed pursuant to this bill.
 - 13) States that a false statement made in a certification submitted pursuant to this bill constitutes grounds for disciplinary action by the CSLB and may constitute grounds for a conviction of perjury.
 - 14) Requires a city, county, or city and county to adopt reasonable administrative requirements to implement this chapter.
 - 15) Requires, as a part of the next triennial update of the California Building Standards Code that occurs on or after January 1, 2027, the CBSC to adopt building standards that do all of the following:
 - a) Authorize a business establishment that is takeout only to operate without providing customer restrooms.
 - b) Authorize a business establishment, regardless of whether the business establishment sells alcohol, with a maximum occupancy of 49 persons to provide restrooms without urinals.
 - c) Authorize a business establishment to install up to 1,000 square feet of patio seating without providing additional restrooms.
 - d) Authorize a business establishment that serves alcohol to satisfy a requirement to provide restrooms by exclusively providing restrooms for use by all genders.
 - e) Authorize a business establishment with a maximum occupancy of 100 occupants to operate without drinking fountains.
 - f) Authorize a business establishment to operate cooking equipment without installing a Type 1 hood, as described, over the cooking equipment, provided that the cooking equipment is operated for the purpose of baking and does not produce cooking odors, smoke, grease, or vapor.

- g) Authorize a business establishment to operate an under-the-counter dishwasher without installing a mechanical exhaust system over the dishwasher.
- 16) Defines “alcohol” to mean ethyl alcohol, hydrated oxide of ethyl, or spirits of wine, from whatever source or by whatever process produced.
- 17) Includes the handling of milk, milk products, or products resembling milk products in the definition of limited food preparation.
- 18) Defines “noncontinuous cooking,” also known as “par-cooking,” to mean the cooking of food in a food facility using a process in which the initial heating of the food is intentionally halted so that it may be cooled and held for complete cooking at a later time prior to sale or service. Specifies that “noncontinuous cooking” does not include cooking procedures that only involve temporarily interrupting or slowing an otherwise continuous cooking process.
- 19) Changes the required temperature within the existing definition of “warm water” supplied through a mixing valve or combination faucet, from a temperature of at least 100 degrees (°) Fahrenheit (F), to a temperature of least 85° F but not greater than 100 °F and makes a conforming change as it relates to handwashing facilities which are required to be equipped with warm water.
- 20) Prohibits a steam mixing valve from being used at a handwashing sink.
- 21) Requires a self-closing, slow-closing, or metering faucet to provide a flow of water of at least 15 seconds without the need to reactivate the faucet.
- 22) Requires raw animal foods that are cooked using a noncontinuous cooking process to be all of the following:
- a) Subject to an initial heating process that is no longer than 60 minutes in duration.
 - b) Immediately after initial heating, cooled according to the time and temperature parameters as specified in existing law for cooked potentially hazardous foods.
 - c) After cooling, held frozen or cold, as specified in existing law for potentially hazardous foods.
 - d) Prior to sale or service, cooked using a process that heats all parts of the food to a temperature and for a time as specified under the existing requirements for cooked potentially hazardous foods.
 - e) Cooled according to the time and temperature parameters specified for cooked potentially hazardous foods under existing law if not either hot held, served immediately, or held using time as a public health control after complete cooking.
 - f) Prepared and stored according to written procedures that meet all of the following conditions:
 - i) Are maintained in the food facility and are available to the enforcement agency upon request.

- ii) Describe how the requirements above are to be monitored and documented by the permitholder and the corrective actions to be taken if the requirements are not met.
 - g) Describe how the foods, after initial heating, but prior to complete cooking, are to be marked or otherwise identified as foods that are required to be cooked prior to being offered for sale or service.
 - h) Describe how the foods, after initial heating but prior to cooking, are to be separated from ready-to-eat foods.
- 23) Replaces the term “thermometer” with “temperature measuring device,” thereby requiring a refrigeration unit to be equipped with a temperature measuring device rather than a thermometer.
- 24) Modifies an existing prohibition on locating a grease trap or grease interceptor in a food or utensil handling area to specify that a grease trap or grease interceptor shall not be located in a food *preparation* or utensil handling area (emphasis added to distinguish from existing law).
- 25) Specifies that the prohibition above does not apply to either of the following:
- a) An aboveground grease trap installed under a three-compartment sink under the following conditions:
 - i) A structural hardship can be determined preventing the grease trap or grease interceptor from being installed in an area not designated for food preparation or food storage or a utensil handling area.
 - ii) The site can provide a cleaning or maintenance plan that indicates how and when the grease trap or grease interceptor will be accessed for service to prevent any cross contamination of food or food contact surfaces; and,
 - b) The site can provide procedures that will be taken to properly clean and sanitize the area following servicing.
- 26) Provides that any food facility approved with a grease trap or grease interceptor that is in operation before the effective date of this new requirement is also exempt.
- 27) Deletes the requirement that passthrough window service openings are limited to 216 square inches each.
- 28) Deletes the requirement that passthrough window service openings be equipped with a self-closing device and instead specifies that the window is required to be closed when not in use.
- 29) States that a passthrough window service opening of up to 432 square inches is approved if equipped with an air curtain device *or a self-closing device* (emphasis added to distinguish from existing law). Requires the counter surface of the service opening to be smooth and easily cleanable.

- 30) Provides that at a drive-through, a passthrough service opening that is larger than 432 square inches is approved if equipped with both a self-closing device and an air curtain device. Requires the counter surface of the service opening to be smooth and easily cleanable.
- 31) Exempts the following areas from the existing requirement that a food facility's walls must be durable, smooth, nonabsorbent, and easily cleanable:
- a) Walls and ceilings of any areas in which *beverages* (not limited to alcoholic beverages) are sold, served, or *dispensed* directly to the consumers, except wall areas adjacent to bar sinks and areas where food, *including beverages*, are prepared (emphasis added to distinguish from existing law).
 - b) Restrooms that are used exclusively by employees, except that the walls and ceilings in the restrooms must be a washable surface.
- 32) Exempts a temporary food facility that is approved for limited food preparation from the existing requirement that temporary food facilities be equipped with overhead protection for all food preparation, food storage, and warewashing areas if environmental factors, including but not limited to precipitation and wind that could contaminate the food, are absent due to the location of the facility or other limiting conditions.
- 33) Includes findings and declarations.
- 34) Specifies that no reimbursement is required by this bill.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown; this bill is keyed fiscal by Legislative Counsel.

COMMENTS:

Purpose. This bill is sponsored by the *Independent Hospitality Industry*. According to the author, "California's neighborhood restaurants are the heart of our communities, yet so many are fighting just to survive. [This bill] is a commitment to stand beside them, offering the support they need to launch, adapt, and thrive. When local restaurants succeed, our communities are stronger for it."

Background.

Contractors State License Board. The CSLB is responsible for implementing and enforcing the License Law, which governs the licensure, practice, and discipline of contractors in California. A license is required for construction projects valued at \$1,000 or more, including labor and materials. The CSLB issues licenses to business entities and sole proprietors. Each license requires a qualifying individual (a "qualifier") who satisfies the experience and examination requirements for licensure and directly supervises and controls construction work performed under the license. The CSLB issues four types of licenses: "A" General Engineering Contractor; "B" General Building Contractor; "B-2" Residential Remodeling Contractor; and "C" Specialty Contractor, of which there are 42 classifications. Each licensing classification (i.e., electrical, drywall, plumbing, roofing, and fencing) authorizes a specific type of construction work.

Building Permit Process. Local building departments and environmental health agencies enforce state and local building standards and the CFRC, and are responsible for evaluating permit

applications for compliance. The local building department cannot issue a permit without approval from the local environmental health agency. Building departments may contract with a private entity to provide plan-checking services. Construction work requiring a permit cannot begin until a permit is issued. After the work is completed, local building officials conduct various inspections to ensure it was done correctly.

This bill would allow a “qualified licensed contractor certifier” to self-certify that a permit for a like-for-like equipment installation relating to a restaurant complies with all applicable codes. This bill specifies that a “qualified licensed contractor certifier” is a licensed commercial contractor who holds a valid license in good standing from CSLB in the appropriate classification for the work performed, has five years of experience performing commercial food service equipment installation or commercial restaurant construction experience, maintains commercial liability insurance, as specified, and is not subject to current enforcement action by the CSBL. The “qualified licensed contractor certifier” must sign an affidavit, under penalty of perjury, attesting that the equipment installation complies with all building, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, fire, and health and safety codes, and the work performed is limited to a like-for-like equipment installation, as defined. The bill further waives the inspection requirement when a “qualified licensed contractor certifier” submits a certification and affidavit.

California Building Standards Code. The California Building Standards Code (Cal. Code Regs., Title 24) regulates the design, construction, quality of materials, use and occupancy, location, and maintenance of all buildings and structures in the state, and includes standards for building safety (the Building Code), fire safety standards (the Fire Code), energy efficiency standards (the Energy Code), and standards for green buildings (CalGreen). The California Building Standards Code is published every three years, though intervening code adoption cycles produce supplements 18 months into each triennial period. The adoption of building standards is subject to a lengthy, public process. The 2025 Building Standards Code took effect on January 1, 2026.

The CBSC is charged, in part, with administering California’s building code adoption process; reviewing and approving building standards proposed and adopted by state agencies; codifying and publishing approved building standards in the California Building Standards Code; and resolving conflicts, duplications, and overlaps in building standards. The California Building Standards Code comprises building standards adopted by state agencies; building standards adopted and adapted from national model codes; and building standards authorized by the California Legislature that address issues and concerns specific to California. Several state agencies are tasked with developing building standards for various building occupancies and building uses. For example, the California Department of Public Health is responsible for proposing building standards related to food establishments. The CBSC’s authority and expertise to develop and propose building standards are limited to the following nonresidential occupancy types and subject areas:

- Specified state buildings as well as buildings constructed by the Trustees of the California State University and the Regents of the University of California.
- Seismic retrofit standards for state buildings, including those owned by the University of California and California State University.
- Standards for parking lot lighting systems for the University of California, California State University, and California Community Colleges.

- Green building standards for nonresidential occupancy types for which no other state agency has authority.

This bill requires the CBSC to adopt specific building standards pertaining to restaurants as part of the next triennial update of the California Building Standards Code. Specifically, the building standards would authorize a takeout-only restaurants to operate without providing customer restrooms, authorize restaurants with a 49-person occupancy limit to provide restrooms without urinals, authorize restaurants to have 1,000 square feet of patio seating without providing additional restrooms, authorize restaurants with a 100-person occupancy limit to operate without drinking fountains, authorize restaurants to operate cooking equipment for baking without a hood, as specified, and authorize a restaurant to operate an under-the-counter dishwasher without installing a mechanical exhaust system over the dishwasher.

California Retail Food Code. The CRFC is intended to prevent and provide safeguards to minimize foodborne illness, protect employees' health, ensure food safety, require the use of nontoxic, cleanable equipment, and specify the level of sanitation necessary for food facilities. As noted in the Assembly Health Committee analysis of this bill:

The CRFC is modeled after the federal Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Model Food Code (Food Code), which is updated every four years to enhance food safety laws based on the best available science. Between each four-year period, the FDA makes available a Food Code Supplement that updates, modifies, or clarifies certain provisions. The Food Code assists food control jurisdictions at all levels of government by providing them with a scientifically sound technical and legal basis for regulating the retail and food service segment of the industry, such as restaurants, grocery stores, and institutions like nursing homes. Forty-eight states and territories have adopted food codes patterned after the Food Code, representing 80% of the US population.

Sixty-two local environmental health regulatory agencies enforce the CRFC. The California Department of Public Health, Food and Drug Branch, plays a supporting role in the enforcement of the CRFC by providing technical expertise to evaluate processes and procedures and to answer technical and legal inquiries for local agencies, industry, and consumers. These provisions are subject to the jurisdiction of the Assembly Health Committee, which previously heard this bill.

According to the author's office, "many small business owners are people of color that depend on their business to bring food to the table. By reducing this unnecessary red tape more people from marginalized communities will be encouraged to own a small business that can also help diversify the community the business lives in."

Current Related Legislation. AB 1963 (Zbur) would require a local building department to allow a "qualified professional certifier," as specified, to certify compliance with appliance building, health, and safety codes for a tenant improvement plan related to a retailer, as defined, and require the local building department to approve or deny the permit application within 20 business days. *AB 1963 is pending in this committee.*

Prior Related Legislation. AB 671 (Wicks and Gabriel), Chapter 470, Statutes of 2025, requires a local building department or permitting department to allow a qualified professional certifier to self-certify that tenant improvement plans relating to a restaurant comply with all applicable

building, health, and safety codes, and requires local building departments to approve or reject those plans within 20 days.

AB 1470 (Haney) of 2025 would have made substantially similar changes to the CRFC that this bill makes as it relates to grease traps and grease interceptors, passthrough window service openings, walls and ceilings in beverage areas and restrooms, and exemptions for temporary food facilities from overhead protections and other specified protections if environmental factors that would contaminate the food are absent. *AB 1470 was held on the Senate Appropriations Committee Suspense File.*

AB 2550 (Gabriel) of 2024 would have made substantially similar changes to the CRFC that this bill makes as it relates to grease traps and grease interceptors, passthrough window service openings, walls and ceilings in beverage areas and restrooms, and exemptions for temporary food facilities from overhead protections and other specified protections if environmental factors that would contaminate the food are absent. Additionally, AB 2550 would have similarly required the CBSC to adopt building standards for restrooms, drinking fountains, cooking equipment, and dishwashers. *AB 2550 was held on the Senate Appropriations Committee Suspense File.*

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:

As the sponsor of this bill, the *Independent Hospitality Association* writes:

Restaurants and small food businesses are foundational to California’s economy, workforce, and neighborhood vitality. Prior to the pandemic, the restaurant and food service sector employed approximately 400,000–500,000 workers in the Greater Los Angeles region alone, and continues to generate significant local and state tax revenue. Yet today, the industry is facing sustained economic pressure. Across the United States, more than 72,000 restaurants closed in 2024, and restaurant bankruptcies reached their highest levels since the pandemic. According to the National Restaurant Association, 42% of operators reported that they were not profitable in 2025. At the same time, businesses are contending with rising food costs, increased labor expenses, higher rents, and ongoing economic uncertainty in many local markets. In this environment, reducing the cost of opening and operating a business is not just helpful—it is essential. One of the most immediate and solvable challenges facing small businesses today is the high cost and complexity of regulatory compliance. Even routine improvements—such as replacing equipment or making minor tenant improvements—can trigger lengthy permitting timelines, multiple agency reviews, and costly requirements that delay openings and strain already limited capital. For many entrepreneurs, these barriers function as a significant barrier to entry, preventing otherwise viable businesses from opening or expanding. For existing operators, these same inefficiencies make it more difficult to reinvest, adapt, and remain competitive.

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION:

There is no opposition on file.

IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES:

Conflict of Interest. This bill allows “qualified licensed contractor certifiers” to sign off on their own work and waive inspection, eliminating any third-party, objective verification that their work was performed correctly.

“Qualified professional certifier” Eligibility Verification. There does not appear to be any mechanism to verify that a “qualified professional certifier” has at least five years of experience “performing commercial food service equipment installation or commercial restaurant construction experience.”

Enforcement. Although any false statement in a certification submission would be cause for disciplinary action by the Contractors State License Board, there is no requirement for either the licensee or the local building department to notify the CSLB.

Vagueness. Most notably, “commercial food service equipment” is not defined, leaving unclear which types of equipment would be covered by this bill. Additionally, this bill covers both the installation and replacement of equipment that is “substantially similar in size, function, and utility demand to existing approved equipment.” It is unclear whether “existing approved equipment” means equipment that was or is currently installed and being replaced, and, if so, how “installation” differs from “replacement.” It is also unclear what constitutes five years of “performing commercial food service equipment installation or commercial restaurant construction experience.”

Breadth. This bill requires a licensed contractor to have “a valid license in good standing in the appropriate classification for the work performed.” The author may wish to narrow the bill to specific contractor classifications, such as a General Engineering Contractor, General Building Contractor, C-4 - Boiler, Hot Water Heating and Steam Fitting Contractor, C-10 - Electrical Contractor, C-36 - Plumbing Contractor, or C-38 - Refrigeration Contractor license.

REGISTERED SUPPORT:

Independent Hospitality Association (Sponsor)
Betsy Restaurant
Burger She Wrote
California Association of Environmental Health Administrators
California Community Foundation
California Restaurant Association
California Travel Association
Central City Association of Los Angeles
Chick-fil-a
Civil Coffee
Council of Infill Builders
Ferrazzanis
Golden Gate Restaurant Association
Inclusive Action for the City
Little Tokyo Service Center
Venice Chamber of Commerce

REGISTERED OPPOSITION:

There is no opposition on file.

Analysis Prepared by: Kaitlin Curry / B. & P. / (916) 319-3301