

Date of Hearing: June 24, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Buffy Wicks, Chair
SB 918 (Seyarto) – As Amended June 11, 2026

Policy Committee: Health

Vote: 15 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill revises requirements for restaurant passthrough window service openings to allow larger openings, including doors equipped with food-safety protections.

Specifically, this bill:

- 1) Deletes a requirement that a passthrough window service opening of 216 square inches or less be equipped with a self-closing device and instead requires that the window be closed when not in use.
- 2) Requires a passthrough window service opening of between 216 and 432 square inches be equipped with an air curtain device or a self-closing device.
- 3) Requires a passthrough service opening that is larger than 432 square inches be equipped with both an air curtain device and a self-closing device.
- 4) Requires a passthrough service opening be used specifically for food delivery operations and not as a general entrance or exit for employees or customers.

FISCAL EFFECT:

- 1) Minor and absorbable costs to the Department of Public Health to respond to technical assistance questions from local environmental health agencies.
- 2) Minor and absorbable costs to local environmental health agencies that inspect restaurants.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** According to the author:

[This bill] will modernize California’s drive-through service rules to reflect how restaurants operate today while maintaining strong food-safety protections. Current law was built around small passthrough windows and can unintentionally block modern designs like two-lane drive-throughs from serving customers efficiently from inside the building. This forces some restaurants to use workarounds that are less safe and take longer because employees must walk out through the entrance, navigate around drive-through traffic to reach the outer lane,

deliver the order, then walk back the same way. [This bill] updates the Retail Food Code to allow bigger drive-through openings with required safety features like air curtains and self-closing doors. The bill also clarifies that these openings may only be used for drive-through service and not as regular pedestrian entrances. This fix keeps California's health and safety rules strong while making drive-throughs work better across the state.

- 2) **Background.** The California Retail Food Code (CRFC) restricts passthrough windows to 432 square inches if equipped with an air curtain device, which, the author argues, effectively prohibits full-size sliding or swinging doors (“cockpit/hybrid doors”) from being used as drive-through openings. Restaurants with two drive-through lanes often cannot serve both lanes directly from the building. Team members must exit through a side or front employee door, walk around the building, and cross active drive-through traffic to hand food to cars in the outer lane. During peak hours, some restaurants station employees outside for extended periods to hand food directly to vehicles, which increases labor needs and puts workers at risk from moving vehicles and bad weather. Cockpit or hybrid doors allow restaurants to safely serve both drive-through lanes faster while using fewer staff outside. This bill updates the CRFC to allow restaurants to use larger drive-through service openings such as larger windows or doors if equipped with specified food safety protections: air curtains or self-closing features, or both, depending on the size of the opening.
- 3) **Related and Prior Legislation.** AB 1470 (Haney), of the current legislative session, and AB 2550 (Gabriel), of the 2024-25 Legislative Session, would have authorized a passthrough service opening of up to 432 square inches if equipped with an air curtain device or a self-closing device, among many other changes to the CRFC. Both AB 1470 and AB 2550 were held on suspense in the Senate Appropriations Committee.

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