



***Sale of Alcoholic Beverages for Off-Premises Consumption Sunset Repeal***

*Amy Spear, President*

Senate Committee on Economic Development, House and General Affairs – April 30, 2025

The Vermont Chamber of Commerce represents businesses of all sizes, from every industry, across every region of Vermont. We understand what it takes to help businesses grow and thrive to build strong, vibrant communities, and businesses have trusted us to lead in advancing the Vermont economy. Vermont Independent Restaurants (VTIR) is a working partner of the Vermont Chamber charged with preserving and advancing Vermont's restaurant and bar industry.

We appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on this issue. The Vermont Chamber and VTIR support the repeal of the sunset provision currently governing the sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption. The Department of Liquor and Lottery's assessment found that the off-premises program did not result in any public safety or compliance issues. As such, the program's continued temporary status is no longer necessary, and the measure should be made permanent.

During the pandemic, the sale of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption emerged as a vital lifeline for many restaurants, providing a critical revenue stream when traditional in-person dining was severely curtailed. Not only did these programs provide much-needed financial support during challenging times, but adult consumers have also come to expect the service. A national survey conducted in 2019 indicated that 56% of adults would order drinks with their to-go orders if available—and the pandemic has only accelerated this trend.

For many restaurants, the struggle with increased costs of goods and labor continues unabated. In this context, offering off-premises alcohol sales is more than a convenience; it is an important tool that provides long-term operational stability. This service allows businesses to diversify their revenue streams and maintain the exceptional experiences that define Vermont's hospitality industry. The hospitality sector is built on experiences, and extending the carefully curated dining experience into the home meets the evolving needs of today's consumers.

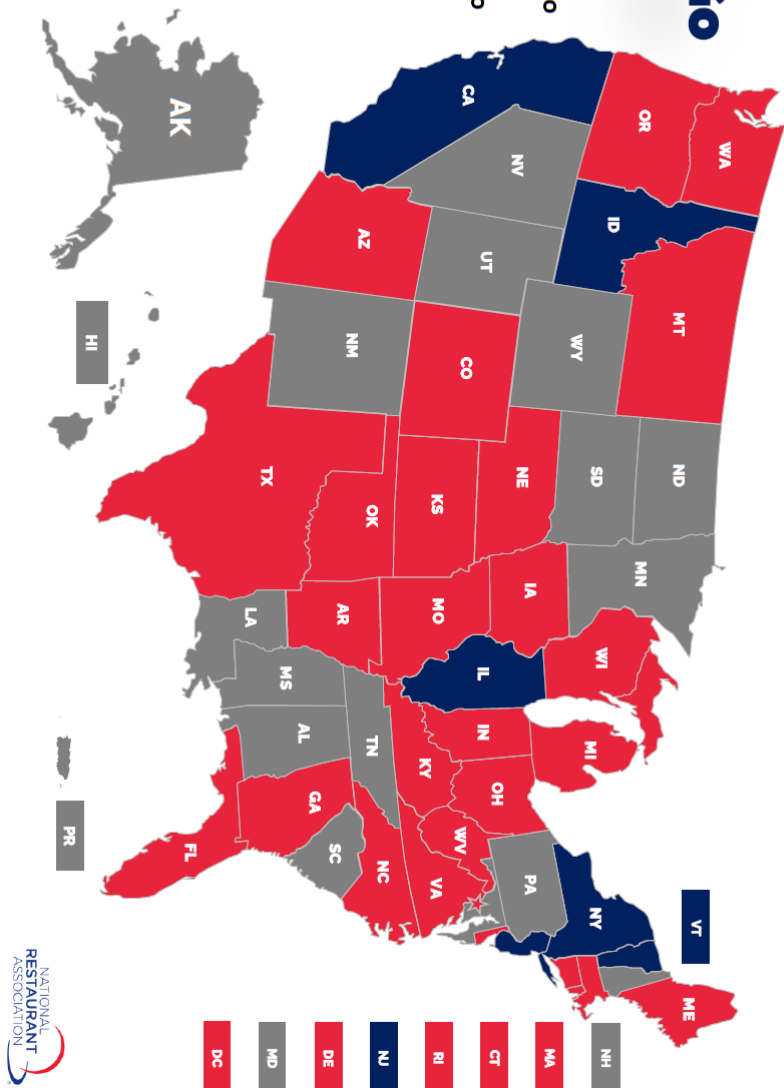
Additionally, more than half of the states have made off-premises alcohol sales a permanent offering. This broader national acceptance further supports the argument that such programs are not only safe and effective but also essential to the continued growth and resilience of the restaurant industry.

In summary, this is a service that licensees have provided for years and one that customers have come to expect. While off-premises alcohol sales may not represent the largest line of business for every licensee at this time, they are undeniably important to the overall ecosystem of Vermont's hospitality sector. Permanently establishing this measure will provide much-needed long-term stability for our restaurants and ensure that Vermont remains competitive and responsive to consumer demands.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We appreciate the Committee's attention to this issue and look forward to remaining a resource as this matter progresses.

# States with Cocktails To-Go

- Permanent cocktails to-go
- Temporary cocktails to-go
- Pending legislation



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