The Honorable Ted Lieu  
403 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

RE: H.R. 7197, the Restaurant Act

Dear Representative Lieu:

On behalf of the City of Beverly Hills, thank you for cosponsoring H.R. 7197, the Restaurant Act, introduced by Representative Earl Blumenauer of Oregon. The City is pleased to SUPPORT H.R. 7192, which has been endorsed by the Independent Restaurant Association.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted daily commercial activity in unimaginable ways, devastating businesses both large and small, but none more than the independent restaurant industry. There are roughly 500,000 independent restaurants in the country who employ 11 million workers. Restaurants are a focal point of social activity in every community, including Beverly Hills.

The federal government must take bold action now to save our community restaurants. States and municipalities are mobilizing our limited resources to keep our local neighborhood restaurants afloat but it is clear more needs to be done. For instance, the U.S. Small Business Paycheck Protection Program, while well intentioned, is too restrictive and does not address the specific challenges faced by restaurants. H.R. 7197 is crafted to offer independent restaurants a financial lifeline so that they may survive the mandated lockdowns and social distancing requirements imposed by state and local governments.

H.R. 7197 establishes a $120 billion Restaurant Stabilization Fund that will be available through grants to food service or drinking establishments, including caterers, that are not publicly traded or part of a chain with 20 or more locations doing business under the same name. These grants do not need to be paid back and funding is made available through 2020. Eligible expenses include: payroll (not including employee compensation exceeding $100,000 per annum), benefits, mortgage, rent, utilities, maintenance, supplies (including protective equipment and cleaning materials), food, debt obligations to suppliers, and any other expenses deemed essential by the Secretary of the Treasury.

Once again, thank you for cosponsoring H.R. 7197 and for your continued support of the City of Beverly Hills.

Sincerely,

Lester J. Friedman  
Mayor, City of Beverly Hills