

# California may extend last call for alcohol

By Patrick McGreevy, Los Angeles Times

If Los Angeles ever wants to join the ranks of Las Vegas or Miami in attracting tourists who want to party, it needs to free its night spots from having to make the last call for alcohol by 2am, according to one state lawmaker.

State Sen. Mark Leno, D-San Francisco, has introduced legislation that would allow California cities to seek permission from the state Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to allow their nightclubs, restaurants and bars to sell drinks until 4a,.

"Many cities in California have dynamic social activities that are vital to their economies, but they lack the flexibility to expand their businesses," Leno said. "This legislation would allow destination cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego to start local conversations about the possibility of expanding nightlife and the benefits it could provide the community by boosting jobs, tourism and local tax revenue."



A bill would allow alcohol sales until 4am in California. Photo/LTN

Currently, the state allows the sale of alcohol between 6am and 2am for bars, nightclubs and restaurants.

The top 100 grossing social and nightlife venues in the country last year generated \$1.5 billion, and 15 of them are in the Los Angeles area, according to Leno's office.

But all of the top 10 venues are in cities that have extended hours, including Las Vegas, New York and Miami, the senator noted.

Senate Republican leader Robert Huff of Diamond Bar said Leno's proposal raises a lot of questions and needs more study.

"What impact will this have on families who live around these establishments?" Huff asked. "Will changing the time impact drunk driving rates? These are the questions I would ask before coming to a decision."

Some of the same concerns explain the initial opposition by Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca, according to spokesman Steve Whitmore. People, he said, "don't need to have two more hours for drinking."

SB635 is supported by industry groups including the California Restaurant Association and the San Francisco Council of District Merchants.