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Dina Roskin (DCA) 212-487-4283 / Kate Lindquist (DOB) 212-566-3473 / Seth Andrews (FDNY) 718-999-2056

## **NEW RULE HEATS UP SIDEWALK CAFÉS TO EXTEND CITY'S OUTDOOR DINING SEASON**

To restaurant owners' and outdoor diners' delight, New York City Department of Consumer Affairs Commissioner Jonathan Mintz today announced a new Rule allowing restaurants to install approved portable natural gas heaters in licensed sidewalk cafés. The Rule was published in today's City Record and takes effect immediately.

"Together with the restaurant industry, we have found a way to hold off winter," said Commissioner Mintz. "With Mayor Bloomberg's leadership, we've been able to make it easier for restaurants to open and operate one of the City's great amenities and extend the café season year round. Industry input has been invaluable. The hard work and coordination of our colleagues at the Department of Buildings and Fire Department has made it possible to ensure that restaurants are able to install approved heaters quickly and safely."

"We are delighted that, thanks to a lot of hard work by the Department of Consumer Affairs, restaurants with sidewalk cafés can extend their seasons and increase their sales by installing approved natural gas outdoor heaters," said Chuck Hunt, Executive Vice President of the New York State Restaurant Association.

To install approved portable natural gas heaters and its accompanying hardware, restaurants must first have a license to operate a sidewalk café from DCA, and then must receive clearance from both the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB) and the Fire Department (FDNY). Working together, DCA, DOB, and FDNY have created a simple Q&A document that walks restaurants through the approval process step-by-step, and ensuring all required plans and paperwork are in order, have committed to completing the application process in no more than 18 days.

"Safety is always our number one priority, yet we must also work to help business owners best utilize innovative technology. Working with our partners at the Fire Department and Department of Consumer Affairs, we were able to develop standards that will allow New Yorkers to enjoy the warmth of natural gas outdoor heaters safely throughout the winter season," said Buildings Commissioner Patricia J. Lancaster, FAIA.

"Dining at a sidewalk café in New York City is one of the most desired experiences for New Yorkers, as well a unique opportunity for the millions of people who visit the city each year," said George Fertitta, CEO of NYC & Company, the City's official marketing and tourism organization. "By extending the ever-popular outdoor café season, the energy on our city streets will continue well into the winter months, as our visitors and residents alike take part in what is truly the quintessential New York City dining experience."

Restaurants with sidewalk cafés are at an all-time high, with approximately 900 legally operating throughout the City – a 25% increase compared to four years ago. With the process for getting a new café faster and easier than ever, DCA works with the industry and neighborhood organizations to help ensure restaurants know the rules and requirements, as well as promote those that are licensed. For a sidewalk café license application, an updated list of all sidewalk cafés now operating, and a Q&A

document with a sample plan on how the installation process will work, call 311 or go online to the DCA website [www.nyc.gov/consumers](http://www.nyc.gov/consumers).