

City Council

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City of Sebastopol

March 18, 2020

Supervisor Lynda Hopkins
5th District
Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
575 Administration Drive, Room 100-A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

RE: Support for Assembly Bill 626 (aka AB626)

Dear Supervisor Hopkins:

This letter is to express the City of Sebastopol's support for AB 626 and to request that the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors Opt-In as soon as possible. The City of Sebastopol is supportive of Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations in Sonoma County. We encourage Sonoma County to opt into AB 626, the Homemade Food Operations Act. AB 626 allows cooks to apply for a Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation Permit (MEHKO permit) to sell food made in their home kitchen.

The City believes MEHKOs offer an opportunity for people to become small business owners, share their culture with their neighbors, and make money from the comfort of their own homes. Additionally, MEHKOs offer an entrance into the food industry, which traditionally has a high barrier to entry. This would allow people in the community be able to generate income in the food industry without the hindrance of excessive costs to start up.

This will help build healthy, resilient communities and create economic opportunities for the people that need them most. Cooks from underserved communities— primarily women, immigrants, and people of color—can now use their skills to generate extra income or incubate a new food enterprise. Without the fear of fines, thousands of existing home cooks will be able to openly access business education and training on safe food handling practices.

This will help protect consumers and improve public health standards. Home food operations must be inspected by local health inspectors and operators must follow a set of health, training, and sanitation standards just like any other food facility. It provides requirements for food safety and will help to eliminate illegal personal home cooking.

It also is a great stepping stone for those that cannot afford a food truck or brick and mortar location and brings the community together as this would help to increase business to local farmers and local businesses for products.

We encourage Sonoma County to opt into this opportunity as soon as possible.

For these reasons, we support the implementation of AB 626, Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations, in our County. Thank you for your leadership in helping bring this opportunity to cooks and their communities!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. Slayter", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Patrick Slayter
Mayor
City of Sebastopol