

Re: HF 1430 (Vang) Cottage food producer requirements modified.

Dear Committee Members

I am a small-scale registered cottage foods producer (RCFP) in Minnesota. I make jam and pickles in my kitchen. My sales are less than \$5000/year, putting me in the Tier I category. The produce comes from my family farm and represents unsold fruit and vegetables that would otherwise be discarded. I have no desire to be a full-time food manufacturer, but the income from these low-hazard foods is welcome.

The current changes detailed in HF1430 seem designed to benefit a small number of Tier II RCFPs at the expense of the majority. According to documents submitted to the MN Senate Agriculture Committee, approximately 95% of RCFPs are in Tier I (less than \$5000 in yearly sales). The proposed bill imposes new registration and training fees on this 95%. In return, approximately 200 people in Tier II will be able to increase their earnings.

I am not opposed to people making more money. I am opposed to imposing new fees and requirements on those who receive no benefit from them. Eliminating the Tier I exemptions helps no one, and harms 95% or so of people producing cottage foods. Since those people are by law making very little money, the change is particularly hurtful.

Many of us were producing cottage foods under the old Pickle Bill (prior to 2015) with no serious safety concerns. Under the 2015 bill, bakers were added to the RCFP list and registration and safety training were required. All these folks make food that is not hazardous under the Minnesota Food Code*. There are no added safety issues from Tier I production under the current or proposed law. Any additional safety issues from increasing the earnings cap should be addressed to those few people affected by that increase.

In summary, please keep the Tier I exemptions in place.

*4626.0020 Subp. 62. §C. Potentially hazardous food does not include:

...(2) a food with an aw value of 0.85 or less; *[note: refers to baked goods]*

(3) a food with a pH level of 4.6 or below when measured at 24 degrees C (75 degrees F); *[note: refers to acidic canned foods, such as jam or pickles]*

Thank you,

Laurine Ford

Edina, Minnesota

laurie.ford@gmail.com