

To whom it may concern,

I write to discuss some of the challenges and opportunities that I am concerned about around food professionals in Mendocino County. My friends are chefs, cooks, and restaurant people, farmers and gardeners, bakers, and others deeply involved with food and nourishment that up until recently found a livelihood from various food services around the county driven by our tourist economy. In efforts to continue to live in this county and to support the local community of food producers and eaters in a safe and sustainable way, we need to get creative with the resources and skills we all have at our disposal in this new paradigm.

In light of the current pandemic and the challenging economic environment that will have lasting negative effects on the livelihood of the communities in Mendocino county, **I believe it to be imperative that the Board of Supervisors consider measures to support local opportunities for skilled workers who have lost major income sources and jobs. This can be done by Voting to Opt-In to the current law, "[The Homemade Food Operations Act \(AB 626\)](#)"** that unanimously passed the state legislature and was signed into law in 2018.

Adopting this piece of legislation, as [other Counties](#) have, could help to stabilize the economic livelihood of both the local producers of foods, and the cooks that prepare and serve this food to people, including those with mobility challenges and who are social distancing, in a safe way to make it through this crisis and also have lasting benefits to the county as a whole.

Without this type of permitting available, the path to a viable business is out of reach for many under-served populations — including busy parents, recent immigrants, and low-income Californians. There exists already an informal economy because of the high barriers to entry to offer commercial food service. Home cooks face criminalization and consumers face public health risks in the existing informal economy.

**The COOK ALLIANCE has been instrumental in supporting counties in adopting, educating and training county officials and future home cooks to make the permitting process and compliance a success...please reach out to them for support.**

**Please support a future where talented home cooks can legally and safely share meals with their neighbors.**

Thank you

Zida Borcich