



Health Department

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON**

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426 SW Stark Street  
Portland, Oregon 97204

To: Chair Shields, Vice-Chair George and members of the Senate General Government, Consumer and Small Business Protection Committee.

**Re: Passage of Senate Bill 631**

My name is Lila Wickham and I am the Director of Environmental Health Services at the Multnomah County Health Department. I would like to express my support for Senate Bill 631.

Each year roughly 1 in 6 Americans get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases. Many of these illnesses are the result of unsafe food safety practices at food service facilities. A core function of public health is preventing foodborne illness through licensing, inspecting and educating food service facilities and their employees on the importance of safe food practices.

Having a consistent presence in and inspecting food service businesses allows public health to develop strong collaborative partnerships with those businesses and their employees. Those relationships are key to building knowledge, improving practices and creating safer dining opportunities for the public.

Public health interventions, including health inspections, are most effective when they address risk in all areas of a system. Having exemptions lessens the protective power of any public health regulation. For this reason we are supporting SB 631 as it clarifies public health's authority to license and inspect food service facilities operated by governmental organizations. The public deserves the same assurance and protections whenever they eat out, regardless of who runs the business.

I ask you for your support on Senate Bill 631 so we can continue our work preventing foodborne illness in all settings where food is served to the public.

If you have questions regarding the bill or our work please contact Claudia Black, Office of Government Relations at [claudia.black@multco.us](mailto:claudia.black@multco.us). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lila Wickham  
Director, Multnomah County Environmental Health



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.