

## **Northwest Food Processors Opposes SB 320**

### **Food safety risks to the public are too significant to ignore.**

Northwest Food Processors Association is currently opposed to SB 320 because of the food safety implications in the bill. Food safety is the number one priority for food makers in Oregon. NWFPFA opposes SB 320 because it does not adequately protect our most important asset, our customers, and may damage our reputations as purveyors of safe, wholesome food products.

- The definition of “potentially hazardous” foods in SB 320 does not fully address the range of food safety concerns that can harm consumers. In addition to hazards from inadequate cooking, there are chemical and physical hazards in foods, as well as the potential to cross-contaminate food with pathogens after cooking.
  - For example, if bakery utensils are used to produce goods with peanuts in them and are not properly cleaned and sanitized before using those same items in a product without peanuts, those allergens can transfer from product to product. For peanut sensitive individual, this cross-contact with peanuts could be life threatening. The most common allergens are milk, egg, peanut, soy, fish, crustacean shellfish, wheat and tree nuts. Many of these ingredients can be used in baked goods. SB 320 would do nothing to protect sensitive individuals from inadvertent exposure.
  - Another example is exposure to pathogens after cooking. If baked cookies are put to cool on a cutting board on which raw meat was previously prepared, pathogens can be reintroduced to the food product and potentially sicken someone who eats them.
- Oversight by food safety professionals in the Oregon Department of Agriculture can help operators of home kitchens to identify food hazards in their operations and take steps to protect against exposing their customers to them. Modest license fees support the state in reviewing recipes and inspecting home kitchens for safety.
- Licensing by the state assists in rapid investigation of foodborne illness cases, so that future illnesses can be avoided. It also signals the state when a home kitchen grows beyond distribution and sales boundaries, and is in need of assistance to address the additional food safety challenges that growth represents.

NWFPFA supports entrepreneurial spirit in business. However, those in the food business have a primary responsibility to produce safe food under conditions that are protective of public health. A label statement is not adequate for that purpose. Oversight by our government partners in food safety not only protects consumers, but provides food safety education resources to those starting out in the food business. Exempting an entire industry from these oversights greatly increases the risk of the public. Until these food safety risks in SB 320 are addressed, NWFPFA cannot support SB 320.