

Northwest Food Processors Opposes SB 320A

Food for human consumption should be regulated

Established in 1914, Northwest Food Processors Association (NWFP) supports the needs of the Pacific Northwest food processing industry in Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Membership includes some of the foremost brand names in the food industry in the United States, key producers of private label and institutional products, and locally run family businesses. NWFP is one of the nation's largest food processing trade associations, with more than 500 member companies including 154 food processors and 357 suppliers.

Food safety is the number one priority for food makers in Oregon. NWFP opposes SB 320A because it does not adequately protect our most important asset, our customers, and may damage our reputations as purveyors of safe, wholesome food products.

Problems with SB 320A:

- 1) SB 320A reduces the amount of food safety regulation when national standards are *increasing* food safety regulations through the Food Safety Modernization ACT (FSMA).
- 2) Under SB 320A home kitchens will not be inspected by ODA, however, they are still under FDA regulations. Thus, home kitchen operators will lose the protection of ODA and their food safety inspections
- 3) If there is a food borne illness from home kitchen operators, FDA could simply shut them down rather than working with ODA to overcome their food safety issue

Policy questions for the Oregon Legislature:

Q: Does Oregon allow these kind of foods be made available to Oregon consumers?

Q: Does Oregon lift the protections to home kitchen operators offered by ODA inspections?

Food safety inspection benefits:

- Oversight by food safety professionals in ODA can home kitchen operators 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.
- 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.

NWFP 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, NWFP cannot support SB 320.