

Submitter: Paul Weiler

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: SB643

Thank you for considering this bill to bring our cottage food industry up to standards. I am currently a home coffee roaster. It is a fairly simple process in terms of taking raw coffee beans to a roasted state to later be ground and consumed by others. But current Oregon Cottage food laws (or lack thereof) prevent me from being able to sell my product even to family and friends. I listened to some questions from the committee today and as someone who graduated from Oregon Culinary Institute, had ServSafe certification and worked everywhere from Taco Bell to high end restaurants, I feel some of the questions were intentionally misleading. The fact is that most of the food you receive from restaurants, coffee shops, farmer's markets, etc- has been handled by people with 'only' a food handler's card. To imply that this is not enough, or creates a safety issue is simply incorrect. As has been pointed out, most other states have real cottage food laws that allow for much more than what is being requested here. The safety record of the cottage food industry should put to rest any question of whether or not that will be an issue. The foods in the current bill that are allowed are not potentially hazardous. This updated bill does nothing to change that. So, it makes no sense to question the safety issue now when it was already established by the previous bill.

On a personal note, I've had dreams about running my own small coffee roasting business. But with a disabled spouse and a need for comprehensive health care that only a corporate job can provide, I've had to put that on the backburner. The realistic costs to start a full scale coffee roasting business away from my residence are frankly astounding. Rent, ventilation, permits, etc. Would I love to have a space like that someday? Sure. But without the cottage food option, there are gaps in the ladder that make it unable to be climbed. Let's give would be entrepreneurs a ladder with all the rungs in tact, so they can work their way to their dreams. Please don't give in to pressure by the people with the money who want to keep the industry to themselves. Give us a chance at a more even playing field.

Thank you again for your consideration. I trust that you will do the right thing and move this bill along for consideration and approval.