



April 25, 2023

**Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
Relating to Home Kitchens**

Clackamas County opposes SB 643: Home kitchens are becoming increasingly popular and serve a variety of needs, including creating opportunities for startup businesses to build a customer base and potentially transition into a larger, more traditional fixed site operation.

As a local public health authority, one of our highest priorities is ensuring the health and well-being of the community through food safety community education, routine food handler training, systematic inspections, and tracking potential foodborne outbreaks. Home kitchens present a series of concerns that, if not adequately addressed, could increase the health and safety risks of the residents of Clackamas County.

SB 643, as written, increases health and safety risks in the following ways:

- Creates considerable challenges in tracing and tracking foodborne illnesses transmitted from home kitchens;
- Limits exposure to catch improperly prepared and labeled food items that could expose individuals with severe food allergies (nuts and unidentified food additives); and
- Increases risk of exposure to environmental toxins such as mold, lead, and bacteria that can exist in homes with limited venting, air conditioning, or clean water and food storage.

SB 643 may create a perception that home kitchens are licensed and inspected in the same manner as commercial restaurants, thus leading to public confusion about the role of local health authorities. We propose that you consider alternatives in which the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) works with public health experts and other key stakeholders to expand and strengthen the existing ODA domestic kitchen license process, and to create a more exhaustive and user-friendly library of home food preparation safety education and training options that are available in multiple languages and across all geographic regions.

We urge a “no” vote on SB 643 as currently written.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.