

February 9, 2018

Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: CSHB217 Alaska Food Freedom Act

Dear legislators,

I would like to express my support for this bill. In the last couple of years I have been on the advisory committee for the Kenai Peninsula Food Hub and the District Manager for the Homer Soil and Water Conservation District. Both positions have given me a better perspective of what agriculture in Alaska faces.

The Food Hub is functioning like a Farmers Market while utilizing online technology to better connect consumers with farmers. I hope this bill will alleviate the restrictions that the Food Hub presently faces regarding the different treatment between online sales and face-to-face sales. So many farmers are benefiting from this new platform, making it possible for them to expand their business model to grow more food for Alaskans.

Presently, however, the Cottage Food regulations don't apply to the Food Hub participants, so many farmers market vendors can't sell with the online sign-up. Food preservation in farming is key so that when you get a flood of cucumbers or strawberries at one time you can preserve them as pickles or jam. Since the Cottage Food regulations presently don't allow for a farmer to connect to a customer through the online platform of the Food Hub, that farmer can't sell value-added products like the pickles or jam to their customers on the Food Hub.

Seems silly to punish farmers for getting tech savvy. Hopefully this bill will alleviate that.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kyra Wagner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kyra" being more prominent than the last name "Wagner".

Kyra Wagner