



City of Placerville

3101 Center Street, Placerville, CA 95667
Phone: (530) 642-5200 • Fax: (530) 642-5538

January 28, 2025

Board of Supervisors
El Dorado County
330 Fair Lane, Building A
Placerville, CA 95667

RE: Letter of Opposition – Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations (MEHKO)

Dear Board of Supervisors:

On behalf the City Council of Placerville, I am writing to inform you that the City Council at its January 28, 2025, regular meeting passed a motion, ***"directing staff to issue a Jetter to the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors with a recommendation that the City opposes full adoption of the MEHKO program but would like to engage in discussion of a one-year pilot program with the City retaining discretion on whether to proceed with the pilot program."***

The City recognizes and supports the intention of this legislation to decriminalize home kitchen operations, promote entrepreneurship, improve access to healthy meals, and reduce barriers to business ownership; however, the current language does not allow tailoring of the program for the needs of local jurisdictions. We feel that implementation of MEHKO would exacerbate concerns that already exist in our community, including but not limited to:

1. **Building and Safety**: The legislation does not hold MEHKO's to the same safety standards as commercial kitchens. These facilities may lack ventilation, fire alarm and suppression systems, and high fire rated walls. This will increase risks to both the public and first responders.
2. **Sanitation**: Inspections by the El Dorado County Environmental Management Department must be announced, allowing operators to prepare for inspections. The space at the time of an inspection may not be an accurate representation of the operator's sanitation practices.
3. **Sanitary Sewer and Septic**: MEHKO's cannot be required to install grease traps. Home restaurant operations could introduce excessive oil, fat and grease into the public sewer or private septic system and create public health hazards from clogged sewer lines and sewage overflows.
4. **Parking and Traffic**: The City currently allows home occupations but takes careful measures to avoid parking conflicts by ensuring only residents are participating in the use and prohibiting customers from visiting the home. While legislation for MEHKO's does limit the number of

employees living offsite, the number of customers potentially visiting the home would have negative effects on older denser neighborhoods with narrow streets and limited or no on-street or on-site parking.

5. Enforcement: While unable to place any restrictions on MEHKOs, the City would be made responsible for a significant portion of enforcement: enforcing signage; requiring business licenses; addressing noise complaints; addressing traffic or parking violations; responding to public nuisance complaints; addressing excessive trash; monitoring unlawful washing of food carts on sidewalks; and possibly regulating increased outdoor food sales.

The City of Placerville recognizes the importance of promoting pathways to business ownership as demonstrated by our ongoing collaboration with the Environmental Management Department to clarify and streamline processes for sidewalk vending and compact mobile food operations. We are open to exploring further ways to make home food operations sustainable income options for individuals and families but believe the current one-size-fits-all MEHKO legislation is too rigid to be successfully applied in the City of Placerville.

We very much appreciate the communication from members of the El Dorado County Environmental Management Department and the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

Cleve Morris, City Manager
City of Placerville