

Testimony in Support of HB178

For Distinguished Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From Laurie Reluzco
Owner of Penelope's BakeStop
Cottage Food Business Operator
Frederick, MD

Subject Written Testimony in Support of HB 178

Distinguished Committee Members, my name is Laurie Reluzco and I am a home baker, operating a Cottage Food Business, and I would like to ask for your support for HB178.

My path to becoming a cottage food baker was not planned. Prior to the pandemic, I was a meeting planner and we all know what COVID19 did to the meeting industry. I have always baked and enjoyed coming up with new recipes. When I won the Frederick News Post 2021 Recipe contest, I started baking even more, selling to close friends and co-workers. Then when I lost my job, I was forced to go all or nothing. I've been accepted into my first Farmers Market which opens April 30th and look forward to the possibility of one day opening a brick-and mortar establishment.

Unfortunately, the restrictive annual sales cap for Cottage Food will not allow me to grow my business. Baking and selling only once a week, has not given me enough opportunity to grow my customer base, gain experience successfully managing a business, or even hire a single employee yet. Additionally, living in Maryland on \$25,000 a year is impossible, forcing me to take a part time job, placing restrictions on my time

Maryland's Cottage Food Laws currently limit annual revenue to \$25,000 making Maryland's law more restrictive than thirty-nine other states. This restrictive sales cap is unnecessary because the MD Department of Health has already determined what non-hazardous foods can be safely prepared in a home kitchen.

By supporting HB178 to raise the \$25,000 annual sales cap from Cottage Food Laws, you would be helping to make Maryland a great place to start or grow a small business.

Sincerely,

Laurie Reluzco
Owner, Penelope's BakeStop