

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB0178

For the Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee

Hello,

My name is Kimberly Haggard and I am in favor of HB0178. I am a cottage food producer in Annapolis, and am part of the Anne Arundel County Farmers' Market each week selling my jams, jellies, and baked goods. Working as part of the cottage food industry has been a great fit for me and my family. As a stay-at-home mom, it offers me the flexibility to work when I'm able, without having to worry about the extra expenses of childcare or a commercial kitchen. Much of my work is done after my son has gone to bed. This flexibility has been especially crucial during the pandemic, when personal schedules are uncertain and demand is high at the farmers' market.

I use local ingredients in my products whenever possible, and purchase many of my ingredients from fellow vendors and farmers at the market. I am glad to be able to put money into the pockets of my local small farmers, while also allowing my customers a local option to purchase their jams and jellies, helping to keep more of their money in the local economy. These local ingredients usually cost more than what I would buy at the big box store, but to me, it is important to support these small businesses.

I have been selling at the market regularly for over three years now, and the \$25,000 cap on sales has limited the growth of my business. With a \$100,000 revenue cap, I would be able to further grow my business, allowing me to pursue it as a full-time option rather than a side business. It would also help me put more money back into the local economy as I will need to purchase more ingredients. As it stands right now, I have to limit the number of markets and sales I participate in in order to stay within the \$25,000 cap.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this bill. I know I am not alone in being limited by this revenue cap, and hope that this bill is passed so that many Maryland Cottage Food businesses can grow and flourish as they are legally allowed to sell more product and meet the demand of their customers.

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