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**Councilmember**  
Esther Lemus

**Town Manager**  
Ken MacNab

August 12, 2021

Ms. Sheryl Bratton  
County Administrator  
County of Sonoma  
575 Administration Drive – Room 104A  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

RE: Town of Windsor Comments on the Microenterprise Home Kitchen  
Operations (MEHKO) Program

Dear Ms. Bratton:

Thank you for providing the Town of Windsor the opportunity to comment on the MEHKO program. While the Town of Windsor is supportive of efforts to create economic opportunities for women and minority populations, the MEHKO program raises several significant concerns that make the program difficult for the Town to support at this time. These concerns include:

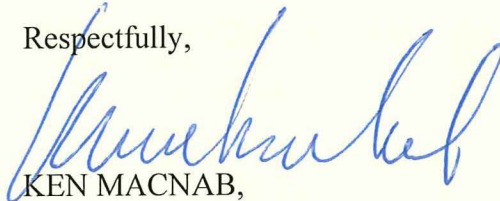
- **Building and Fire Code Compliance.** The MEHKO program would allow for commercial food preparation in a residential kitchen setting that will not have health and safety improvements otherwise required for commercial kitchen operations. Further, it appears that cities would not have the authority to require building and fire code improvements necessary for ensuring the health and safety of building occupants or the visiting public. Specific areas of concern include fire suppression, grease traps, food storage, building accessibility and emergency exiting.
- **Land Use Impacts.** Home-based businesses have traditionally been regulated through home occupation use permits to ensure the compatibility of commercial uses in a residential area and to protect the integrity of neighborhoods. MEHKO does not provide cities with any land use authority to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of residents will be protected. Land use issues of concern include hours of operation, parking, odors, noise and increased traffic (automobile and truck).
- **Enforcement Concerns.** The Town is concerned that the MEHKO program would require the commitment of Town staffing and funding resources to respond to health, safety and land use complaints from neighboring property owners.

In light of the above, the Town of Windsor cannot support the County “opting in” to the MEHKO program in its current form. This said, the Town would be open to reconsidering its position if revisions addressing the health, safety and land use concerns identified above could be incorporated into the program. The Town

would also be open to development of an alternative local program in collaboration with the County and other cities. Finally, the Town would have appreciated having more time to consider this program. The amount of time provided did not allow for us to engage with the community and share that feedback with our decision makers.

Thank you again for providing this opportunity to comment on the MEHKO program. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,



KEN MACNAB,  
Town Manager

cc: Windsor Town Council  
Jessica Jones, Community Development Director  
Cyndi Foreman, Sonoma County Fire District