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September 15, 2026

Michael Lynn, President
South Robertson Neighborhoods Council
<mailto:info@sosrnc.org>

Dear Michael Lynn,

Thank you for your correspondence with the Department of Public Health (Public Health) and for bringing your concerns regarding sidewalk food vending operations in the neighborhood represented by the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council (SORO) to our attention.

Public Health shares your concerns regarding food safety, sanitation, and public health risks associated with unpermitted food operations. We understand the issues raised regarding food handling, sanitation, handwashing facilities, food temperature controls, and other health and safety requirements, as well as concerns regarding impacts on surrounding businesses.

With respect to conducting enforcement of unpermitted sidewalk food vending, Public Health has shifted its strategy. Changes in California law, specifically decriminalizing sidewalk food vending, have limited local enforcement mechanisms in this area. Additionally, previous enforcement efforts directed at individual sidewalk vending operations have had limited effectiveness, with vendors often returning to sell in nearby locations within hours or days of enforcement activities. In many instances, individuals encountered at street vending operations are employees rather than the responsible parties directing the enterprise and often are preyed upon vulnerable individuals subject to labor violations and/or human trafficking.

As a result, Public Health has shifted away from street level enforcement activities to instead focus on enforcement efforts on the larger organizations operating unpermitted food enterprises, including central food preparation and distribution hubs that support multiple sidewalk vending locations. These centralized operations often provide food preparation, storage, transportation, and equipment for multiple vendors. By addressing the source of organized unpermitted food activity,

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Public Health aims to improve long-term compliance and better protect public health. To date, Public Health has worked with law enforcement and the District Attorney's Office to close operations at 17 unpermitted distribution hubs, resulting in the confiscation of 36 tons of food and citing of the warehouse operators.

Additionally, Public Health has implemented numerous programs to promote legal pathways for vendors to operate safely and compliantly. These include the development of permits for Compact Mobile Food Operations (CMFOs), Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations (MEHKOs), and promoting Temporary Food Facilities at approved community events.

In addition to enforcement, Public Health is expanding outreach and education efforts to inform consumers about the importance of purchasing food from permitted food facilities and food vendors, including encouraging the public to look for permit postings or letter grades where applicable. This campaign is currently underway, and more information can be found on Public Health's website www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh. Outreach is also underway to promote legal pathways for vendors to operate safely and compliantly, including as mentioned above for CMFOs, MEHKOs, and Temporary Food Facilities at approved community events.

We appreciate the information you have provided and your continued partnership in promoting safe food practices within the community and look forward to further engagement.

Sincerely,



Liza Frias, REHS
Director of Environmental Health
Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Environmental Health Division

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