

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### PRESS RELEASE

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## Board of Supervisors Passes Ordinance Permitting Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations in Alameda County

*Ordinance Would Allow Residents to Prepare and Sell Food From Their Homes*

**Oakland** – The Alameda County Board of Supervisors today voted unanimously to approve the first reading of an ordinance that permits Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations (MEHKO) throughout the County with the exception of Berkeley, which has already passed a similar measure. The new ordinance, championed by Supervisor Wilma Chan and Board President Keith Carson in partnership with nonprofit home cooking proponent The Cook Alliance, would allow residents to prepare, cook, and sell food in their community from a private home kitchen.

Passed in September 2018 as Assembly Bill 626, state law allows California counties to opt in and allow MEHKOs within their jurisdiction. With today's vote, Alameda County moves a step closer to becoming the third county to allow MEHKOs, joining Riverside and Santa Barbara counties. The Board would still have to approve a second reading of the ordinance at their meeting on May 18<sup>th</sup> before the ordinance would take effect in Alameda County.

"Today's vote moves Alameda County closer to ensuring equity and opportunity for all residents who aspire to cook from their homes," said Supervisor Chan. "I am proud that our County has taken the necessary steps to ensure that talented chefs and entrepreneurs in our County have every chance to succeed while providing greater food options to our communities."

By permitting MEHKOs, Alameda County has lowered the barrier to entry for food entrepreneurs by allowing home cooks the opportunity to earn income and legitimize a business from the convenience of their residence. The ordinance will also provide new avenues for the preparation and sale of culturally-appropriate cuisine in ethnic communities, as well as healthier options in disadvantaged neighborhoods where access to nutritious food may be limited.

"The restaurant industry has been hit incredibly hard during the pandemic and providing a way for individuals to continue using their culinary skills to support themselves by selling products made at home is needed now more than ever," said

President Carson. “Alameda County is proud to be one of the first counties to opt-in to this law, which will remove barriers for budding entrepreneurs to start and grow a business in a way that is more affordable, and particularly for marginalized communities, provide greater opportunity to get their products into the marketplace.”

Each MEHKO is limited to 30 meals per day or 60 meals per week, with all food required to be prepared, cooked, and served on the same day. Proprietors are allowed one full-time equivalent food employee other than family or members of the household, and each operation may not exceed \$50,000 in verifiable gross annual sales. Customers may dine in, pick up their food, or have it delivered. MEHKOs are exempt from many standard food facilities requirements but are still required to obtain a Health Permit and are subject to inspections by the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health.

The text of the ordinance can be viewed here:

[http://www.acgov.org/board/bos\\_calendar/documents/DocsAgendaReg\\_05\\_04\\_21/HEALTH%20CARE%20SERVICES/Set%20Matter%20Calendar/ENVHLTH\\_310584.pdf](http://www.acgov.org/board/bos_calendar/documents/DocsAgendaReg_05_04_21/HEALTH%20CARE%20SERVICES/Set%20Matter%20Calendar/ENVHLTH_310584.pdf)

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### **About Supervisor Wilma Chan**

Alameda County Supervisor Wilma Chan represents District 3, which includes the cities of Alameda, San Leandro, parts of Oakland including Chinatown, Jack London, Fruitvale and San Antonio neighborhoods, and the unincorporated community of San Lorenzo. She is currently President of the Board of Supervisors, Chair of the Health Committee, and a member of the County’s Personnel, Administrative, and Legislative Committee, the Budget Committee, the Unincorporated Services Committee, and the Ad Hoc Committee on Immigrant Rights. For more on Supervisor Chan’s accomplishments and current initiatives, please visit [www.acgov.gov/board/district3](http://www.acgov.gov/board/district3) or connect on Facebook with “Supervisor Wilma Chan.”