



Letters from Minnesota Cottage Food Producers

Stories from Minnesota cottage food producers seeking to ship their products to better support their families, businesses, and customers

Benefits of the Reform

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In Minnesota, there is great interest in cottage food, but the state's regulatory framework creates unnecessary delivery challenges for entrepreneurs who sell nonperishable homemade food and for their customers.

Reforming state law to allow cottage food producers to ship their products to consumers supports:

- Small businesses, including women-, veteran-, and BIPOC-owned businesses.
- Small farms, including young and emerging farmers, and rural Minnesota by giving farmers an additional source of revenue selling jams, herbs, and produce beyond Minnesota's short growing season and farmers markets.
- Resiliency in the local food supply chain when the national supply chain fails.
- Consumer choice.



Today, 35 states allow cottage food producers to ship their products, and there are no known food safety issues resulting from these sales.

The states are Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Written to you



The following pages highlight Minnesotans who desire to ship their safe cottage foods as a way to support their families and communities. Their stories are a snapshot of the thousands of others like them. Right now, cottage food producers are prevented from reaching their entrepreneurial dreams because of outdated laws preventing shipping. Reform will make a big difference in their lives and the lives of those around them.

Please support the inclusion of the cottage food provisions in Senate File 1955 in the Omnibus Agriculture Bill.



Sarah Effhauser

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The Sugared Beet Cookie Company
Grand Forks, MN

"I am writing today in support of allowing Minnesota cottage food producers to ship their products. I myself am a cottage food producer and started my cookie company in the winter of 2019. Our company, The Sugared Beet was one of the main sources of funding for our international adoption of a little boy with Down syndrome in 2020-2022.

Now that our son is home, we are looking to the future and how we can build a company that he and other individuals with developmental disabilities can find meaningful work in.

By allowing CFPs like myself to ship, we open up a whole new customer base. Not only does this simply create more revenue, but allows us to share our message of inclusion with a wider audience.

By building a small scale business model that allowed for shipping within MN, we could take a small step towards a large scale commercial operation that allowed for shipping nationwide. These small, strategic steps would allow us to be more present to our family as they are young, support the local economy, build a brand and a solid foundation instead of just jumping into commercial production because of necessity.

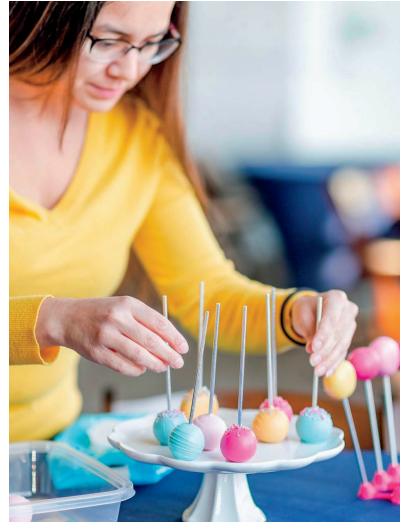
I thank you for your time and your work to further support and grow a robust Minnesota economy."



Raina Orozco

Lil Pen Popz
Brooklyn Center, MN

"I am a CFP specializing in cake pops. Shipping would greatly impact my business and those of other CFPs. Shipping would make it easier for me to access more customers. Having the ability to ship makes it easier for me not having to take my 4 children on deliveries that are further out. This will help my business reach new customers & another opportunity to make more money. I would be able to reach those who don't have access to custom made cake pops in their area, those who aren't able to leave their homes, or want to send gifts to friends, family, or other businesses.



For other CFPs who have freeze dried, canned goods, & more, this would be a great option for them as well. The ability to ship would allow them to have more reach especially to those who don't have these specific baked goods around them. Please consider shipping for CFPs in Minnesota. It was very difficult moving to a new state not knowing anyone and feeling very much alone. Being a CFP the last 4 years has allowed me to meet new people and connect with other Bakers/makers. Having my business gives me the freedom to create, connect with others, and make extra income for my children so that they can do extra curricular activities for school. Thank you for your time. Blessings!"



Benjamin Peck

Talking Loon Foods
Blaine, MN

"Allowing the shipping of cottage foods throughout Minnesota would literally be a life changer for me. My small summer business of going to weekend farmers markets to sell my mushroom jerky would be able to turn into a year round business with customers throughout the state. I would quickly be able to quit my day job and start investing more time and profits back into my business.

Many many customers have asked me about shipping, but I have been unable to do it. Being a cottage food producer was always supposed to be a stepping stone to creating my own facility, but the shipping restriction has made me need to keep my day job for financial security. With shipping allowed, I would be able to grow my business immensely faster than I can now. Thanks for your consideration."



Ronnell Podlewski

Ferndale Farm Products
Askov, MN



"I am a cottage food producer that also sells jams, jellies, salsa & baked goods, (plus bedding plants) at the Moose Lake Fanner's Market, it would benefit me greatly if I could ship my items to customers in other parts of Minnesota as I have a pretty good following for my food items and get asked if I can ship them during our "off season" and as of now have had to say no. Please consider this in the new bill as 35 other states have already done this. Thank you in advance for your consideration."



Nikki Casper

Waseca, MN

"I am a Minnesota Cottage Food Producer who works an additional full time job. By allowing me to participate in direct sales to consumers and mail those items directly, I would benefit greatly! I don't have much spare time to attend farmers markets and special events, because I care for my disabled veteran husband. If I could mail orders, these orders would actually be fresher because they would be made right away, right before mailing! Please consider this allowance to include mail orders. Thank you."



Cherie Stielow

Aengus Harrington aka Ferments & More
Benson, MN

"My husband and I both lost our jobs during the COVID pandemic. Our cottage food business made it possible to continue to pay the bills and put food on the table. Our customer base has grown as we have been traveling to additional markets outside of our local area to continue to make ends meet. With the rising gas prices, time, etc., we are missing out on serving our customers with additional orders as we are unable to ship. My 13-year-old son has been joining me at markets for the last 3 years with his cotton candy and fresh baked pretzels. He would also benefit from being able to ship to keep his aspiration of going commercial alive. :) Thank you for your time."



Danielle Hanson

The Freeze Dried Barn
Lakeville, MN

"I want to take this time to let you know how important it is to my small business that shipping be allowed. I just started my business at the end of 2022, so I'm new to this. For context, I do work a full time corporate job from home and I have 4 kids, I opened my business to sell freeze dried candies at vendor events and it initially was to do for fun "on the side" for added income. 5 days after I started my business my brother (who was the sole provider for his family) committed suicide and I have since been using this income as a way to help his family with whatever they may need. Then last month my husband lost his full time job in the mortgage industry due to the economy.

So now my side business has kind of turned into a full time job, I receive dozens of emails and messages a week asking if I can ship up north or down to Albert Lea or even as close as Hastings because this person was disabled and couldn't drive for pickup. It's so frustrating having to turn down thousands of dollars in potential income because of a law that just doesn't seem fair. I'm honestly doing more than asking here, I'm begging, that you allow shipping for cottage food producers as it would make a world of a difference for my family and my late brothers family."

Christine Hamm

Gingersnap Vegan Bakery
Moorhead, MN

"The ability to have a home-based bakery has been wonderful for my family. My youngest daughter has multiple disabilities, which makes it very difficult for me to work outside of the home. My bakery has allowed me to make an income from home while working around my daughter's needs and schedule. The ability to ship my baked goods would be wonderful for me.

Because of my daughter's disabilities, participating in community events and farmers markets is also quite difficult, so shipping would open up a new sales avenue. I also see it really benefitting consumers. Most of my customers are vegan, but many others buy my baked goods because they cannot eat dairy and/or eggs due to allergies or food intolerances. There's a lack of good vegan, dairy free, and egg free baked goods available in much of the state outside of the metro area. I think consumers would love additional choices and the ability of cottage food producers to ship would definitely help!"



Sara Brodeen



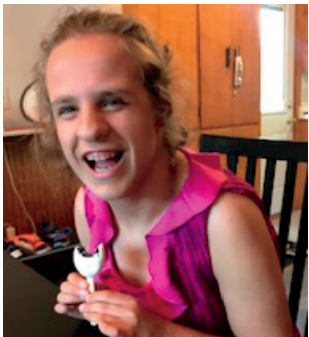
St. Cloud, MN

"My name is Sara Brodeen. I live in St. Cloud, MN with my husband and special needs daughter. I recently became a Cottage Food Producer and am loving it! I would especially love it if I could ship my products. I have a blind customer who cannot drive, so when he orders, I need to drive to him. This gets to be time consuming and overwhelming for my daughter. I also have Rheumatoid Arthritis and driving can be a bit much for me at times. If shipping were allowed, my husband could deliver my products for me, so I wouldn't be in an arthritic flare for as long or as often.

I know that if you tasted my treats, you would definitely approve the shipping in your bill. I would like to mail you some treats to show my appreciation of everything you have done so far for us, but I am currently not allowed to do so.

If we were able to ship our products, our small businesses would boom, and boost our economy, because we would be buying more products to make more treats for people. We would create more jobs by having to employ more postal carriers. Employment is something that has been lacking since so many people have been laid off since COVID.

35 of the 50 states already allow this to happen, that is 70% of America. Let's keep America together and allow Minnesota to ship baked goods as well. I sincerely thank you for taking the time to read our thoughts and being open to hearing our wishes."



Aaron Wills

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Little Hill Berry Farm
Northfield, MN

"We are an organic berry farm located in Northfield. Our primary berry season is July through September. During that time, we have pick-your-own blueberries and raspberries and sell pre-picked blueberries, raspberries and strawberries at our farm store. In addition we make value added products under the Cottage Food Law such as jam and shrubs (a fruit flavored vinegar product). During our main July through September sales season, we offer these value added products at our farm store, and they are very popular.

We could be selling value added products year round, but because we cannot ship them there are limited sales opportunities when we are not open for fresh berries and have customers coming to the farm. We are routinely contacted by customers who tried our jam at the farm and would like to order a large quantity to last them the year or who would like to buy jam for Christmas gifts for friends and family. Since we are not allowed to ship the jam or other products, we often lose out on this sales opportunity because it isn't worth it for them to drive an hour to the farm to pick up a case of jam. (We draw many customers from 1 to 2 hours away.)

Being able to ship our cottage food products would be very important for our farm business. We could significantly expand our sales of value-added products especially in the wintertime and early spring when people are not coming to our farm for berries. I would estimate we could easily double our sales of value-added products."



Shelley Harris

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The Treat Wag'n
St. Paul, MN

"As a small business holding a MN cottage food license and whose "employee" is our daughter Fiona who has Down Syndrome, it would be a monumental improvement for our business to be able to ship or hire alternate delivery for our products within MN. We started our pet treat making business when Fiona expressed wanting to have a job like her older brother. Knowing how difficult it is for a person with developmental & intellectual disabilities to have a job and especially before the age of 20-21, we decided creating the opportunities for her would be easier.

Fiona currently is working to learn the baking and selling process but our hope is that she will be able to take on more direct responsibilities as she gets older including delivery. Since transportation for her would be difficult, alternate options would be a big benefit for her and others who may have limitations for personally delivering their products.

Please support the new language allowing cottage food businesses to sell and deliver our products via mail, UPS, FEDEX, Grub Hub, etc. or have a representative of a farmer's market pick up items at a stand for a customer. This change would allow Fiona to be more involved in this business and to ultimately have meaningful employment. Thank you for your consideration and support."



About MNCFPA

The Minnesota Cottage Food Producer's Association (MNCFPA) is the first association of cottage food producers in the country. Its focus is to increase communication among cottage food producers, create additional industry-focused educational opportunities, and offer a united voice on policies that affect cottage food production.

For more information,
contact Jennifer Carriveau, Vice President,
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About IJ

The Institute for Justice is a nonprofit, public interest law firm that works through litigation and legislative advocacy to secure the constitutional rights that allow all Americans to pursue their dreams.

For more information,
contact Meagan Forbes, Legislative Director,
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**Please support the inclusion of the
cottage food provisions in Senate File 1955
in the Omnibus Agriculture Bill.**