



Homemade Texas
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March 24, 2026

Austin City Council
301 W. 2nd Street
Austin, TX 78701

Re: Support for Resolution No. 26-1387 - Front Yard Businesses and Neighborhood Storefronts

Dear Mayor and Council Members,

I am writing in strong support of Resolution No. 26-1387 and the Strong Local Commerce Initiative, including the authorization of front yard businesses and neighborhood scale storefronts.

As the Founder and President of Homemade Texas, I work directly with thousands of cottage food producers across the state. I have also been involved in the development and expansion of the Texas cottage food law for more than a decade. What I am seeing across Texas right now is troubling. Cities are shutting down small home-based sales, especially those taking place in front yards, on porches, and in driveways, often without any clear public health or safety reasons.

These enforcement actions are not based on evidence of harm. In most cases, they reflect outdated assumptions about what belongs in a residential neighborhood.

At the same time, the Texas Legislature has moved in a very different direction. State law protects the right of individuals to produce and sell certain foods from their homes and prohibits local governments from requiring permits, licenses, or fees for those activities. Despite this, many cities continue to rely on zoning restrictions or home occupation rules to limit or prohibit direct sales from a residence.

The proposal before you recognizes something important: small-scale neighborhood commerce is not a problem to be restricted. Rather, it is an asset that strengthens communities.

Front yard businesses and similar activities help neighbors connect with each other. They create opportunities for people to start small businesses with little overhead. They support walkability by giving residents reasons to stay within their neighborhoods. They also keep economic activity local in a way that benefits families and communities directly.

The resolution correctly notes that walkable neighborhoods need destinations. Cottage food producers provide exactly that. A front yard table with baked goods or a porch pickup setup does

not disrupt a neighborhood; it brings it to life. It gives neighbors a reason to interact and support each other in a way that larger retail cannot replicate.

These operations are naturally limited in size. They are constrained by the home, the individual, and the immediate demand in the neighborhood. They are low-impact by their very nature.

Across Texas, however, cities are treating these small-scale activities as if they are incompatible with residential life, even when there is no evidence of meaningful negative impact. In many cases, the issue is simply that the activity is visible.

That approach works against the goals that cities often promote, including support for small businesses, affordability, and strong communities.

Homemade Texas strongly supports the right of cottage food producers not only to prepare food in their homes, which is protected by state law, but also to sell it there. For many producers, selling from home is the most practical and accessible way to operate.

Austin has an opportunity to lead on this issue. By adopting this resolution and moving forward with the Strong Local Commerce Initiative, the City can align its policies with state law, reduce unnecessary barriers to entrepreneurship, and support neighborhood level economic activity. More importantly, it can help create more connected and livable communities.

Rather than continuing a pattern of shutting these activities down, Austin can take a different approach. It can recognize that small, visible, home-based commerce is a positive part of neighborhood life.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Kelley Masters
Founder and President
Homemade Texas