



House Bill 989

On—Farm Home Processing License—Revenue Limits—Prohibition

Position: UNF

Date: **February 21, 2025**

To: **Health and Government
Operations**

On behalf of the Caroline County Commissioners, we wish to express our **strong opposition** for **House Bill 989 On—Farm Home Processing License—Revenue Limits--Prohibition** which removes revenue limits for on-farm home processing license holders. While we recognize the importance of supporting local farmers and small-scale food producers, eliminating revenue restrictions without implementing additional health and safety regulations could create significant public health risks and unfair market competition.

Concerns for Caroline County:

- **Public Health & Food Safety Risks:**
Removing the revenue cap could lead to large-scale food production in unregulated home kitchens, increasing the risk of foodborne illnesses due to limited health inspections and oversight.
- **Unfair Competition with Regulated Businesses:**
The bill would allow unlicensed home kitchens to compete with fully regulated commercial food businesses, which must comply with strict health and safety regulations. This creates an uneven playing field for restaurants, bakeries, and other small businesses.
- **Lack of Accountability & Oversight:**
The current \$40,000 revenue cap helps ensure that home food production remains small-scale and manageable. Removing this limit without establishing clear regulatory safeguards could result in larger, unregulated operations with inadequate consumer protection.

We urge the General Assembly to reject HB 989 in its current form or amend it to include stronger food safety measures. Expanding opportunities for farmers and food entrepreneurs is important, but it must be balanced with public health protections and fair business practices.

Sincerely,

J. Travis Breeding, President