



INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE

**Testimony in Support of HB 25-1295
Colorado Senate Local Government and Housing Committee**

April 30, 2025

Dear Chair Exum and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 25-1295. My name is Meagan Forbes. I am an attorney at the Institute for Justice. We are a nonprofit public interest law firm that works to protect civil liberties, including economic liberty. We have represented food truck owners in civil rights lawsuits nationwide challenging arbitrary local restrictions on vending. We ask that you please support this bill because it will remove needless regulatory barriers for food trucks.

A vibrant food truck scene benefits everyone. Food trucks offer accessible opportunities for entrepreneurship, create jobs, and enrich the communities they serve.ⁱ Research also shows a positive correlation between the presence of food trucks in a community and more restaurants.ⁱⁱ

Colorado's approach to requiring food trucks to apply for redundant local permits where they operate makes it difficult and costly for food truck entrepreneurs to operate. This bill gives food trucks that are inspected and permitted by one local government some flexibility to be mobile without having to navigate redundant permitting requirements in every local jurisdiction.

Other states have successfully streamlined food truck permitting at the state level to make it easier for food trucks to operate. Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Utah, Rhode Island and Tennessee have streamlined its permitting process for food trucks, and food trucks in these states have benefitted from having a clear and uniform process for getting permits.

Food trucks should not have to navigate layers of redundant regulations at every turn. Reducing these barriers for food trucks is an important way the state can safely create opportunities, support these small businesses, and stimulate economic growth. I encourage the committee to support the important reforms in this bill. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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ⁱ Dick M. Carpenter, II, Upwardly Mobile: Street Vending and the American Dream, Sept. 2015, <https://ij.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/upwardly-mobile-web-final.pdf>; Michael Hendrix, Lawrence Bowdish, Food Truck Nation, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation Food Truck Index, <https://www.foodtrucknation.us/>.

ⁱⁱ Dick M. Carpenter, II, Kyle Sweetland, Food Truck Truth: Why Restaurants—and Cities—Have Nothing To Fear From Mobile Food Businesses, Feb. 2022, <https://ij.org/report/food-truck-truth/>; America's Food Truck Industry is Growing Rapidly Despite Roadblocks, The Economist, May 4, 2017, <https://www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2017/05/04/americas-food-truck-industry-is-growing-rapidly-despite-roadblocks>.

May 1, 2025

Senator Tony Exum, Chair
Senator Julie Gonzales, Vice Chair
Colorado Senate Local Government & Housing Committee

RE: Small Business Majority's support for HB25-1295: Food Truck Operations

Thank you, Chair Exum and members of the Committee:

My name is Hunter Nelson and I'm the Colorado Director for Small Business Majority, a small business organization with a mission to empower America's diverse entrepreneurs to build a thriving and equitable economy. I'm pleased to provide testimony on HB25-1295, legislation that would set minimum standards for a universal fire permit for food truck businesses and allows those with a state health permit to utilize that permit in Denver without needing to obtain a separate one.

Many food truck business owners in Small Business Majority's network have expressed that duplicative regulations in the various different municipalities in which they do business place a burden on them and their ability to start and grow their enterprises. This regulatory burden has even caused some food truck entrepreneurs to share that they are seriously considering closing their business due to stress and financial strain. These entrepreneurs understand the need for regulation and want to comply; however, having to obtain permits for every municipality is costly, time-consuming and oftentimes unnecessary for business to be safely conducted.

Food truck businesses are mobile and their ability to do business in multiple localities is crucial to their success. It allows them to maximize opportunities to generate more revenue and secure a healthy bottom line to support themselves and their business operations. Yet having to obtain multiple permits for every jurisdiction in which they do business is a barrier to their success. They are forced to choose between operating in select municipalities and therefore decreasing their revenue or obtaining the permits in multiple municipalities and therefore absorbing high costs that cut into their bottom line.

This legislation would make both the health and fire permits required by food truck businesses in Colorado more universal, which would significantly decrease some of the regulatory burden that food truck businesses face and support their success.

Food trucks are an integral part of the cultural fabric of our communities, and starting a food truck is a milestone on many entrepreneurs' journey toward establishing a brick-and-mortar restaurant. This is especially important for immigrant, women and BIPOC small business owners who often open a food truck as a first step in their entrepreneurial journey.

We urge you to pass HB25-1295 so that Colorado's food truck small businesses are not burdened by duplicative permitting requirements and can more easily operate in multiple jurisdictions.

Sincerely,

Hunter Nelson
Colorado Director
Small Business Majority