

February 28, 2017

Representative Carolyn Partridge, Chair, House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry  
Representative Richard Lawrence, Vice -Chair, House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry

RE: Accessory On-Farm Businesses; 17-0560 ver. 1.1

Dear Rep. Partridge, Rep. Lawrence and Committee,

#### Definitions

The current proposed definition of “raw agricultural commodity” [page 3, lines 11-12] does not include fiber or horticultural products, which results in neither of these products being classified as an “agricultural product” [page 2, lines 19-20]. This unintentionally excludes farm operators with these products from being able to operate “accessory on-farm businesses.” Including fiber and horticultural products in the definition of “accessory on-farm business”, or amending the definition of agricultural product to include these products could resolve this exclusion.

#### Private Events

As presented by Sam Smith, the proposed language limits the ability of small producers to operate accessory on-farm businesses. The total square footage devoted to an accessory on-farm business includes all interior space and land area used for the business [page 4 line 1-7]. For a 150-person event, this would require approximately one acre of “footprint square footage” of buildings on the farm dedicated to farming, [page 4, lines 2-3] - a 100’ x 440’ barn, which is slightly smaller than the typical size of a milking barn on a Large Farm Operation.

To open this option up to small producers, Section (10)(B)(iii) [page 4 line 1-7] could be revised to read

(iii)The total square footage devoted to the business does not exceed ~~49~~ 25 percent of the total footprint square footage of buildings dedicated to farming, including greenhouses. The total square footage shall include only any interior area and land area used for the business; ~~including~~ excluding parking and circulation, deliveries, waste storage, ~~event areas, portions of structures,~~ and display areas. The municipality shall make this determination through its administrative officer or other assigned personnel.

A small farm operation with two high tunnels at 2,178 square feet each would be able to hold events by devoting 1,089 square feet of a building or land to an accessory on-farm business. An accessory on-farm business operator would still be required to provide parking and meet other standards as regulated by the municipality. I also believe this will be easier to manage at the municipal perspective, and potentially require less impervious surface if the farm operation and accessory business use can share existing parking and circulations areas.

Thank you for your time,

Stephanie Smith, Chief Policy Enforcement Officer, Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets