

September 27, 2008

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger,

My husband has very articulately described our present situation, however, there are a few things I would like to add. The small family farm is not only a vanishing breed, but right here in California, our small dairy farm is at the edge of extinction – to be precise – one signature away. We are the only ones left producing and bottling our own Jersey milk. The thousands of customers that we serve value highly and pay a premium for this product. They have spoken up in defense of their right to continue to drink this milk. We sincerely believe that if you were to veto SB201, that we as business owners and they as the consumers would be deprived of this precious freedom.

Your office continues to be told by the CDFA that this Bill is a weakening of the safety standard. This couldn't be further from the truth. SB201 has stricter standards for pathogen testing which will protect the public health. Already, without SB201, we have never had a pathogen in our milk in over 70 years. How do you improve on a perfect record? It is difficult to see the logic here. The line of thinking that makes more sense is that the CDFA knew that the coliform regulation of AB1735 was a standard that is impossible to comply with on a consistent basis and would eventually shut us down. This is the reason that it was not vetted by your office in the first place and was stealthily enacted.

Because of the way CDFA behaved with AB1735, the secrecy, the lying that it was just a consent item, not informing the very people that would be most effected, they cannot be trusted to be forthright. Therefore, no one is receiving the true picture from them. They are now acting in their own self interest and veiling it with concern for the public safety. We believe there needs to be an investigation and those who are responsible need to be held accountable.

Governor Schwarzenegger, I voted for you because I believed that you were going to get rid of unnecessary regulations that inhibited business. AB1735 is a prime example of an arbitrary and unnecessary regulation that does nothing for public safety and will put us out of business.

CDFA is currently promoting Claravale Farm as their poster child of compliance, but this is totally misleading. We are walking a tightrope with a 2 out of 4 notice. Once more strike and we're out. Because we haven't had that strike yet, they say we are in compliance. We do not believe this agency has the integrity any longer to regulate us, as long as there are people within who will continue to try to get rid of raw milk.

One last appeal, as a mother and using the six degrees of separation rule. My nieces were the flower girls in Caroline Kennedy's wedding. My brother in law was one of Ed Schlossberg's groomsmen. These kids grew up on raw milk as did my four. They are healthy and no one ever got sick on it. On the contrary, they thrived. I hear testimonies on a daily basis from our customers who are so grateful for what we do.

Please sign this bill for us and for the people of California. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Best regards,

Collette Cassidy, owner
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