

November 5, 2012

Dear Mr. Gil,

Attached is a picture of three food trucks parked on L Street in front my restaurant Crepeaway (located @ 20th and L Street).

Attached is also a picture of a food truck vendor serving food from the truck without any shoes or socks on the same street (different truck, different day).

Here are my concerns:

1. Food Safety - There are no unannounced health inspections for food trucks because food trucks do not have designated locations. This is why the man serving food in the picture attached does not have shoes or socks on. He knows that there is no chance of a random health inspection because DOH does not know where that truck is.

This is a huge food safety issue. If food trucks are given a few designated spots, then the Department of Health can adequately inspect them as they do other restaurants, ensuring the safety of consumers. Currently there are only scheduled inspections for food trucks that are useless because the vendor can prepare for the inspection before it happens.

Furthermore, I cannot understand how a food truck can safely operate without access to a bathroom for the employees. Any brick and mortar restaurant without a bathroom would be closed immediately by the DOH. This is blatantly discriminatory. The bottom line is that food trucks should be held to the same standards as regular restaurants or else those safety standards lose merit.

2. Meter Regulation - Who is the person in charge of checking the meters to ensure that the food trucks do not endlessly refill it? The officers who check the meters are not there all of the time and would likely miss the expired meter and never know that the food truck is illegally "squatting" by re feeding the meter. Enforcement is just unrealistic in the current system.

3. Economics - Brick and mortar restaurant pay rent. The rent is based on foot traffic. Food trucks dilute the foot traffic because the same amount of patrons now have access to about 200 more food establishments in the same area (food truck are food establishments). This massive reduction in revenue during peak business hours will force brick and mortar restaurants to close due to the inability to pay rent payments.

The solution:

1. Give food truck designated spots so the DOH can monitor them properly and require each truck owner to install or provide access to a bathroom for employees.

2. Prohibit the trucks from parking within 50 feet from brick and mortar establishments as they do in most other us cities.

My intention is not to eliminate food trucks but to insure that they meet same requirements as brick and mortar restaurants in order keep consumers safe and brick and mortar restaurants in business.

I look forward to your reply and thoughts on the matter.

Warmest Regards,
Saad Jallad
Crepeaway Restaurant Owner/Operator