

November 13, 2012

Mr. Helder Gil
Legislative Affairs Specialist
Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs
1100 Fourth Street SW
Room 5164
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Mr. Gil

My name is Anna Bran-Leis and my husband Shawn & I are the owners of DC Empanadas, LLC. We've been operating as a food truck in DC since January 2011 serving lunch and special events throughout the city. In September of this year we were able to expand our business and open a kiosk at Union Market in Ward 5.

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer I decided I needed to quit my job in the non-profit sector and follow my passion for food. This was quite the journey! Trying to start a restaurant, in DC in the middle of a recession proved to be impossible. Since we were not millionaires with celebrity chef status we did not have banks or investors lining up at the door to fund our venture. It was at this point that we decided to start a food truck and thus DC Empanadas was born.

My husband and I worked 20 hour days to get our business off the ground and build our brand. We were fortunate that DC vending regulations allowed us the flexibility needed to grow our customer base and thrive in such a difficult economy. This flexibility is what has given us the opportunities to grow and expand our business.

As a small business in DC we feel the need to give back to our community and are strong supporters of various local charities. This is our second year that we partner with My Sister's Place for a toy drive. Last year on our food truck we collected toys for every child in their shelters. We often give our food, time & money to schools, food banks & other local non-profits.

We hope to follow in the foot-steps of some our food truck friends whose truck has allowed them to expand into a brick and mortar restaurant. Much Like Josh Saltzman who owns Kangaroo Boxing Club, Stephan Boillon who owns Mothership, and Roger Horowitz who owns Pleasant Pops, it is our goal for 2013 to open a brick and mortar restaurant.

If you pass regulations that restrict our ability to do business in high density areas you will be directly responsible for destroying our industry and ultimately closing several thriving small businesses. Please allow our mobile businesses to continue to thrive and grow and continue to be a part of the vibrant food scene in Washington, DC.

Sincerely,
Anna & Shawn Leis
Owners, DC Empanadas LLC.