

November 12, 2012

I have owned Harry's Restaurant at 11th and E st. N.W. for 20 years. We have always had a brisk Monday through Friday lunch business. About 6 months ago our lunch sales started declining and we have had to lay off some servers and cooks. This slowdown in the lunch part of the business I believe is because of the 9 or 10 food trucks that have set up in the Metro Center area 1 and 1/2 blocks away. Restaurant customers at lunchtime usually will only walk 2 or 3 blocks to get lunch. When they walk past vendors selling discounted food, a large percentage of them will decide to eat lunch from the trucks instead of walking to the restaurant. They are doing a great business for themselves but the cost to the business owners, employees, and landlords in the area is great also.

Harry's Restaurant employs over 40 people, most of them DC residents. How many DC residents do the food trucks employ? My guess is that my one restaurant employs more DC residents and pays more DC taxes than all 9 of the trucks combined. Besides keeping some very vocal food truck supporters and lobbyists happy, what good are these food trucks doing for the residents and local economy of DC?

John Boyle