



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senator Kennedy Proposes Limit on Food Truck Fees to Unleash Industry Growth

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY | October 16, 2012

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Inflated fees hold back business development and jeopardize local and statewide growth of the booming food truck industry

Food truck industry leaders from the Buffalo and Rochester markets endorse Kennedy's proposal

Kennedy: New York State is Hungry for Small Business Growth, But Steep Fees Are Putting the Brakes on the Food Truck Industry

BUFFALO, N.Y. – With inflated fees jeopardizing the local growth of the booming food truck industry, Senator Tim Kennedy, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Economic Development Committee, announced today his legislation to limit fees on food trucks. Kennedy aims to slash the business fees that municipalities charge food trucks and help unleash the growth potential of this exploding industry.

Kennedy's legislation would limit the annual fees that a city or town can charge a mobile food vendor to \$250. Considering the \$1000 annual fee in the City of Buffalo, Kennedy's proposal represents a significant reduction in local fees – which will help spur industry growth. Currently, Amherst has a 90-day permit that carries a fee of \$100 per food truck per location. That means if a food truck regularly stops at five different locations in Amherst, total fees hit \$1000 in just six months.

“Western New York and New York State are hungry for small business growth, but steep fees are putting the brakes on economic progress for the booming food truck industry,” said Senator Kennedy. “Inflated municipal fees are holding back entrepreneurs and their ability to innovate and turn their ideas into new jobs for local workers. By reducing and limiting fees on food trucks, we will unleash the growth potential of the industry, boost entrepreneurship and help put people to work.”

For comparison, in Cleveland, Ohio – a city similar yet slightly larger than Buffalo – mobile food vendors must pay an annual \$100 permit fee and food truck managers must purchase a \$60 identification badge from the city. Even in Chicago – a city of 2.7 million people – a two-year permit for operating a food truck costs \$660.

Kennedy's legislation empowers municipalities and protects local control over regulating where and when mobile vendors can sell their food products within town or city limits.

“Our legislation will ensure local governments don’t price these small businesses out of existence and stymie the statewide growth of the industry,” Kennedy added.

Leaders in the food truck industry from the Buffalo and Rochester markets have endorsed Kennedy’s proposal.

“We’re like any small business – when fees climb to excessive levels, it limits our ability to grow, innovate and break into new markets. Burdensome fees also prevent us from hiring as many people as we’d like,” said **Peter Cimino, co-owner of Buffalo’s Lloyd Taco Truck**. “The food truck industry is exploding across the nation, and it’s starting to pick up steam in Western New York. By reducing and limiting fees on food trucks, Senator Kennedy’s legislation will encourage entrepreneurs to give it a shot and help our industry reach its fullest potential across New York State.”

Elizabeth Clapp, owner of Rochester’s Le Petit Poutine truck, said, “My community is important to me. I’m in this business to be more of a part of the city of Rochester. With the adjustment of these fees, my mobility will be improved and my capability to meet the demand I am already finding can be met. I am thrilled by the possibilities and support put forth by Senator Kennedy. His proposal will help boost the food-truck business and make sure that New Yorkers throughout our state are able to enjoy the unique, delicious and mobile foods our businesses offer.”

“Fees for food trucks should be closer to those already charged on brick-and-mortar businesses – usually in the range of \$100 to \$200. To charge more for food trucks, who pay property taxes through their rental fees for commissaries, is unfair and stifles the growth of this innovative industry,” said **Kelly Brewer, owner of The Sweet Hearth**. “Senator Kennedy’s proposal will put a necessary check in place to ensure that residents throughout the state have access to the diverse, affordable and delicious food options that food trucks provide.”

In addition to the potential for business growth and job creation, Kennedy pointed to the diverse benefits that food trucks bring to their communities. Mobile eateries can help address the issue of food deserts – neighborhoods where there is an absence of grocery stores or healthy and affordable food choices. For example, at the Buffalo Niagara Medical Campus – where over 12,000 people work every day – quick and affordable food options are limited. Also, food trucks often provide entrepreneurs the “foot-in-the-door” they need to pursue future goals of opening brick-and-mortar restaurants.

The Western New York Regional Economic Development Council has identified bringing young people – especially young professionals – to the City of Buffalo as one of its top priorities. Legislation that limits the fees on food trucks will be a first step toward promoting lively new opportunities in inner-cities across the state, encouraging entrepreneurship and attracting young professionals to downtown areas.

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Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate’s 58th District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, Eden, Hamburg and West Seneca, the city of Lackawanna and parts of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at <http://kennedy.nysenate.gov>.