

June 9, 2021

To: Allentown City Council President Julio Guridy

From: Anthony Durante, 416 N 8th Street, Allentown, PA 18102

Cc: All Members of Allentown City Council

Via: Michael Hanlon, City Clerk

Subject: Public Comment Regarding Bill 31 - Amending the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Allentown by repealing Section 1314.02.C.4 (7) of the Zoning Ordinance with respect to the prohibition of on-site frying of foods in the Traditional Neighborhood Development Overlay District (TNDO) in its entirety, providing for a repealer clause, a severability clause and an effective date.

In regards to the proposed subject bill named above, I am writing to encourage the Allentown City Council to vote **against** this bill as it is contradictory to public safety as the original law was intended to protect.

In [a study of restaurant fires done by the U.S. Fire Administration](#), data of 5,600 restaurant fires from 2011-2013 was analyzed. The **number one** cause of restaurants was cooking with deep fryers and ovens being cited as especially dangerous. Cooking represented 63.5% of the fires in this study. Additionally, [the National Fire Protection Association issued a report in 2017](#) that looked at data from 7,410 fires in eating and drinking establishments from 2010-2014. Cooking equipment was the **leading cause** in this study (61%) with cooking materials (e.g. oils) being ignited in 43% of the cases. Deep fryers were involved in 21% of the cases – **that's one of five fires.**

The Allentown Planning & Zoning Bureau has also made the recommendation to not change the current zoning ordinance language as it increases the danger of a fire occurring and it goes against the intention of the Traditional Neighborhood Development.

Also, the letter from the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission, states that this is a “minor proposal” that is “Generally consistent with *FutureLV: The Regional Plan*. However, LVPC does make any specific reference as to how it complies and after reviewing the regional plan personally, it is completely unclear how the proposed bill complies with or goes against the plan and, therefore, seems irrelevant.

Neither Councilman Guridy nor Councilwoman Mota, the sponsors of this bill, live anywhere near the neighborhoods covered by the TNDO. The same applies to LVPC Executive Director Becky Bradley. None of them will feel the impact that this “minor proposal” to change the Zoning Ordinance brings. Meanwhile, Allentown City residents living in the TNDO will be stuck dealing with the fumes, odors, and increased risk of fire that restaurants with deep fryers will bring should the proposed bill be passed.

As such, I again appeal to the members of Allentown City Council to **vote against Bill 31.**

With kind regards,



Anthony Durante