



SB 969 – Vietnamese Rice Cakes

SUMMARY

SB 969 would allow for an exemption in the Health and Safety Code for traditional Vietnamese Rice Cakes to be sold year-round, provided that they are labeled with health precautions warning that the rice cake must be consumed within two days.

BACKGROUND

Traditional Vietnamese rice cakes are manufactured primarily around the holiday seasons such as Tet. There are generally two forms of rice cakes that take more than ten hours to cook; one with meat-filling and one with a fruit-filling. Traditionally, families will keep these rice cakes for up to one week before safely consuming, although many will refrigerate them by the end of the day. Under current requirements established by the Department of Public Health due to the presence of perishable ingredients, Vietnamese rice cakes must be sold refrigerated or frozen. However, it is against tradition to purchase rice cakes that are cold. This stigma prevents traditional Vietnamese rice cakes from being sold year-round in stores without facing citations from public health regulators. Additionally, these cakes are often sold for charitable events to raise money during the holidays.

EXISTING LAW

The California State Legislature passed two measures that allow for similar exemptions for traditional cultural recipes. In 2001, AB 187 (Liu) allowed for Korean rice cakes to be sold, provided they have been at room temperature for no more than 24 hours. In 2010, the Legislature passed SB 888 (Yee) which similarly allowed for Asian rice based noodles to be sold, provided they

are labeled as perishable and are to be consumed within 4 hours of manufacture. Vietnamese rice cakes contain different ingredients and cooking methods so they are excluded from both of these current statutory exemptions.

THE SOLUTION

SB 969 would allow for perishable Vietnamese rice cakes that are cooked and served according to traditional recipes to be sold at room temperature for no more than 48 hours with appropriate warning labels.

FISCAL EFFECT

Unknown at this time

SPONSOR

Author

SUPPORT

City of Fountain Valley

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