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## **Texas Restaurants to Provide Must Needed Relief to Overburdened Food Supply Chain**

*In partnership with distributors and producers, Texas restaurants will now provide critical perishable and non-perishable items for sale.*

AUSTIN, TX (March 24, 2020) – In an effort to provide relief for overwhelmed grocery stores, give consumers a convenient place to purchase necessary goods, and to keep Texas restaurants open, Governor Abbott announced today his support for restaurants to sell retail products direct to consumers.

Dr. Emily Williams Knight, CEO of the Texas Restaurant Association and State Representative Tan Parker of Denton County worked with Governor Greg Abbott and key agencies to produce the guidelines that restaurants can begin operating under today. Licensed retail foodservice establishments may donate or sell food directly to consumers provided such foods are in its original condition, packaging, or presented as received by the retail foodservice license holder.

“Restaurants are the leaders in food safety across Texas and are experts at keeping people safe while operating and adhering to guidelines around food receiving, food storage and food handling”, said Knight. “With close to 50,000 restaurants across Texas, we can leverage the industries’ infrastructure to support moving food from farm to table and supply much needed relief to consumers while helping to keep restaurants and their employees in business.”

With the restrictions placed on restaurants due to COVID 19, dine-in food service across the state of Texas was closed by Governor Abbott’s Executive Order on March 19, 2020. While the Texas Restaurant Association supports the Governor’s decision to ensure reduced spread of COVID 19, restaurants are now working hard to convert to curbside, takeout, and delivery. It is a natural fit to have restaurants lead the way in addressing overloaded consumer demand, and frequently depleted stock of essential perishable and non-perishable items that Texans need.

There is an opportunity for restaurants that have remained open to offer off-premises service to provide retail products that come from the restaurant supply chain distributors. These distributors include Sysco, Ben E. Keith, U.S. Food Service, Jake’s Fine Foods, Gordon Food Service, and others that currently make up the wide distribution network across Texas. In an effort to support the Texas farmers and ranchers, many of these raw materials also come from local producers. Protecting these vital industries is critical to our Texas economy.



“On this National Agriculture Day, I am thrilled to see this action being taken that combines the livelihood of Texas farmers and ranchers with our restaurants, their employees, and supply chains to provide critical food and supplies for Texans. By upholding safety standards and providing a crucial avenue to keep food products readily available, this strong partnership will be instrumental in keeping Texans fed while also protecting jobs,” said Representative Parker.

Guidelines for handling items for donation or sale to individual consumers is posted on the websites for the Texas Department of State Health Services at [www.dshs.texas.gov](http://www.dshs.texas.gov) and the Texas Restaurant Association at [www.txrestaurant.org](http://www.txrestaurant.org).

#### **About the Texas Restaurant Association**

The Texas Restaurant Association was formed in 1937 to serve as the advocate in Texas and the indispensable resource for the foodservice industry. Today, as a leading business association, TRA represents the state’s \$66 billion restaurant industry, which is comprised of more than 48,000 locations and a workforce of 1.3 million employees. Along with the Texas Restaurant Association Education Foundation, the Association represents, educates and, promotes the growing industry.

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