



## WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

**TO:** Senate Committee on Agriculture, Small Business and Tourism

**FROM:** Senator Robert Cowles and Representative Lee Nerison

**DATE:** March 6, 2014

**RE:** Senate Bill 603 and AB 744

Chairman Moulton and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for having a hearing today on SB 603 and AB 744, which makes a simple change to the timing for the issuance of licenses for dairy plants, food warehouses, food processing plants, retail food establishments, and meat establishments.

Under current law, these license holders pay an annual fee and each type of facility has a uniform expiration date. New business owners in these industries must pay the full annual license fee when they start up their businesses, even if it's only a month before the uniform expiration date for the license. They are then required to renew their annual license again at the full cost.

SB 603/AB 744 provides that if any of these food-related businesses apply for an initial license within three months of the license expiration date for that kind of facility, the license is valid until the expiration date in the next calendar year; that is, for up to 15 months. Under our bills, the license holder would get up to 15 months for the price of 12 months.

We feel this small change would be very beneficial to our new small businesses in these food-related industries. As you know, the first year of operation is critical to the success or failure of any new business, and we feel this modest improvement is a step in the right direction of giving our new food-related businesses the best chance to succeed. Thank you for your consideration of these bills.