

From: Gabriella Iraola [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 22, 2026 11:27 AM
To: City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>
Subject: A&M BBQ Feedback

Dear Sebastopol City Council,

I love the City of Sebastopol, which is why I am deeply frustrated by what I've been reading regarding the treatment of A&M BBQ.

It is extremely disappointing to see the city entertaining exaggerated and misleading claims from a small but vocal group of neighbors attempting to pressure one of the very few Black-owned businesses in town out of its location. Describing a small local barbecue restaurant with two smokers as an "industrial-scale export meat operation" is plainly absurd, and many residents can see that for what it is.

What is especially troubling is the apparent double standard. There are other restaurants in Sebastopol that cook with fire outdoors and do not appear to face this same level of scrutiny or hostility. A&M BBQ seems to have become a target not because it is violating any reasonable community standard, but because a handful of people have decided it does not fit their personal vision of what downtown Sebastopol should look like.

A&M BBQ is not some faceless corporation. It is a black-owned, beloved local business run by people who have contributed positively to this community and created a gathering place that many residents genuinely value. Small independent businesses are already difficult enough to sustain in Sonoma County without coordinated pressure campaigns built on distorted claims and fearmongering about air quality data.

I urge the Council not to cave to a vocal minority at the expense of the broader community. Sebastopol should be a place that supports black-owned, locally owned businesses and welcomes new energy and culture into downtown — not a place that pushes people out because a few loud residents object to change.

Please approach this situation with fairness, consistency, and common sense.

Gabriella Iraola