

Please do not approve Grocery Outlet for Sebastopol

From: joelle hoffman [REDACTED]

To: City Council

Dear Sebastopol City Council:

I am a food broker, and my business and income are dependent on independent grocery stores' sales throughout Northern CA. I do NOT receive commissions or receive sales credit for national accounts including Whole Foods, Lucky's, Safeway, CVS, and Grocery Outlet. My job performance, and the success of my brands, are determined by the business generated by my independent grocery accounts such as Fircrest Market, Andy's Market, Pacific Market, and Sebastopol Community Market, and other independent stores throughout Northern CA.

I respectfully ask that you do not allow Grocery Outlet into Sebastopol, as it will negatively impact my income, as well as 50+ of my fellow food brokers. If my independent accounts discontinue brands, or if their sales suffer because the same products are carried by Grocery Outlet, my income will drop dramatically, as will my overall sales, which could result in me losing the brands that I represent. Without brands to represent, I have no income.

There are numerous Grocery Outlets a short distance away; Rohnert Park (9 miles), Santa Rosa (4th St., 8.5 miles), Windsor (14.8 miles), and Petaluma (17 miles). We don't need one in Sebastopol. As Grocery Outlet locations are corporately owned, they shouldn't be allowed in downtown Sebastopol anyway. The "operators" of Grocery Outlet are just that, just operators, not franchisees so they do not own the business. Also, did you see the SF Chronicle and KQED articles about Grocery Outlet locations using Facial Recognition in their stores? <https://www.kqed.org/news/12091161/grocery-outlet-scans-your-face-while-you-shop-critics-say-its-a-privacy-problem> <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/grocery-outlet-bay-area-facial-id-shoplifting-22343639.php>

My livelihood depends on you declining Grocery Outlet's request to take over the vacant Rite Aid building. Rather than Grocery Outlet, why not have a YMCA, a Maker space or something that will benefit the community, rather than have something that will hurt the businesses already here who have been supporting Sebastopol for decades, and independent businesses like mine, who will also suffer.

Thank you for your consideration.

JH

Joelle Hoffman

Nor Cal Food Sales

