

**From:** Megan Kaun [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 30, 2026 3:02 PM  
**To:** City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>  
**Subject:** A&M BBQ Cease and Desist - Request for Enforcement

Dear Mayor McLewis and Sebastopol City Council,  
I am writing to request that the City Council enforce the April 8th cease and desist order issued to A&M BBQ at 495 S Main Street. I understand why the city may be hesitant to take action, however, I want you to know that there is significant support from affected residents in my South Sebastopol neighborhood to stop operation of the large commercial smokestacks and enforce the city's order.

I have been working with the Sebastopol Building Department since last fall to investigate the smoke pollution affecting our neighborhood and find a fair and reasonable solution. Below is some background and technical information as I understand it regarding this public health issue.

- A&M BBQ replaced their original (permitted) two small smokers with two massive commercial-grade smokers with tall smokestacks
- These smokers are inappropriate for this location and restaurant size
- The city reviewed PurpleAir data from a monitor near the hospital and determined that our PM2.5 routinely spikes to 100-200 overnight due to A&M BBQ operations
- The city understands that A&M is essentially operating as a meat production factory - smoking large volumes of meat for wholesale distribution outside the county. Our city is being used as an **unpermitted industrial facility**
- **April 8th:** The city issued a formal cease and desist order to A&M requiring removal of the large commercial smokers by April 18th
- A&M makes promises to reduce emissions but in practice is completely ignoring the order - both commercial smokers have been fired back up

**Why This Is a Serious Public Health Issue:**

This is not simply a nuisance or bad smell. PM2.5 from commercial smoking operations is a documented health hazard that causes:

- Asthma attacks and respiratory problems
- Heart disease and cardiovascular damage
- Increased risk of lung cancer
- Premature death in vulnerable populations

**Children and elderly neighbors are especially vulnerable** to PM2.5 exposure. Unlike agricultural smells (like compost), PM2.5 particulates lodge deep in lungs and enter the bloodstream, causing systemic health damage.

The tall smokestacks of the new commercial smokers deliver the smoke directly into our uphill neighborhood. **My family cannot open our windows at night** because heavy smoke infiltrates our home. Our smoke detectors have been triggered by the smoke that often smells like burning garbage.

I would like to note that the originally permitted two small smokers were fine and appropriate. This complaint is about industrial-scale equipment producing hazardous pollution levels in a residential area.

### **The Regulatory Loophole:**

I contacted the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) last fall. They came out and personally investigated our situation. We discovered that these large commercial smokers fall into a regulatory gap:

- BAAQMD oversight only extends to char-broilers (which require filtration) because "nobody puts large commercial smokers like these within city limits"
- These large commercial smokers have zero air filtration, meaning toxic PM2.5 particles from burning wood and meat smoke flow directly into our neighborhood air unfiltered
- Auto body shops, dry cleaners, regular restaurants, gas stations, and even our cars are all required to filter their emissions - but not commercial meat smokers
- These massive smokers have zero emission controls because regulations were never written for this use case
- A&M is actively exploiting this loophole, and our neighborhood is paying the health cost

### **The Path Forward:**

A&M BBQ could stay open per their original permit, they just need to return to using the two small smokers. Unfortunately, A&M refuses to do this. Instead, they are accusing the city of threatening a local business. This is not a fair accusation. The city has bent over backward to accommodate A&M. It is not the city's fault if A&M refuses to be a good neighbor to local residents.

**A&M is making the choice** to operate industrial equipment that violates their permit rather than return to appropriately-sized equipment. It is unfortunate that the city's only option if A&M refuses to use appropriate equipment is to shut them down.

### **Request:**

I respectfully request that the Sebastopol City Council enforce the April 8th cease and desist order that requires A&M to cease operation of the two large commercial smokers. The city permit department has done its job - they investigated, found violations, and issued the order. A&M has chosen to ignore it, forcing residents to continue breathing hazardous pollution.

Thank you for your attention to this serious public health matter.

Sincerely,

Megan Kaun

Environmental Engineer

