

**From:** Julia Fischer <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 10, 2026 11:49 AM  
**To:** City Council <citycouncil@cityofsebastopol.gov>  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Grocery Outlet - NO thank you

Our community has a population of engaged citizens with a thriving array of shops representing shared values - small businesses owned by residents and/or featuring local artisans. You can find tools for DIY home skills including beekeeping, herbalism, weaving, fermenting, canning, gardening and brewing. We have a Time Bank where citizens exchange skills instead of cash. We value and celebrate diversity and the arts. We protest, we nourish our youth with fulfilling activities and model the meaning of citizenship. We are a diverse community with, what I believe is a strongly shared vision for an equitable and peaceful future.

The problem with an entity such as the Grocery Outlet chain store is that it is a business that feeds on misfortune. Much like the Dollar Store concept, it is important to recognize the predatory consequences of Grocery Outlet's ultra non-local, cheap "food" and to visualize the massive ships, crowding our oceans, piled high with containers of cheap plastic goods from China or another economy that is producing junk for Americans to consume. Cheap food can represent shortcuts in production and poor wages or conditions for laborers. The affluent think that accessibility to cheap crap solves the wealth gap - giving the poor the illusion of having it all too. Environmentally, this is a devastating way of doing business.

At a time when we are returning to regenerative agricultural practices and old-fashioned compassion and lovingkindness, adding more corporate flavor to a decidedly strong community fabric is such a backwards step. There are many other types of businesses that could be nestled in the heart of our town that celebrate and support the residents and neighbors who choose to reside here. Let's NOT be "Gross Out's" 401st eyesore.

There are many alternatives we might pursue or consider. We don't have to sell more things. An indigenous language, arts and cultural center, workshops on climate, democracy, peace, justice and equality, or how to grow olives or raise backyard chickens. We could use a relevant mentorship/apprenticeship program for citizen youth entering the complex world of today. We have an untapped source of elders who can teach skills from navigating personal and professional relationships to how to take nonviolent action towards achieving goals. Instead of more, cheap things, we can build the next generation of Earth stewards - kids with a purpose and wholesome, engaged, community-related inspiration.

This is a moment for concerned, cohesive communities everywhere to really listen for what will lead us, sustainably, into the next era. Let's do something different and wildly trusting in the human spirit - long live Sebastopol!

Great thanks.  
Julia Fischer  
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