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American Food Safety Institute
Health Regulation Compliance, Inc.

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AMERICAN FOOD SAFETY INSTITUTE
 HEALTH REGULATION COMPLIANCE, INC.

August 10, 1999

Mr. Robert Nyce
 Mr. Jim Smith
 Mr. John McGinley
 Pennsylvania Independent Regulatory Review Commission
 333 Market Street 14th floor
 Harrisburg, PA 17101

Regarding: Final-Form Regulation, PA Department of Agriculture
 7 PA Code Chapter 76
 Food Employee Certification I.D. No. 2-107

Gentlemen,

The American Food Safety Institute (AFSI) is the nation's largest provider of food manager certification services and is based in Bucks County. Our staff consists of Physicians, Dietitians, Sanitarians, and adult education professionals. In cooperation with the National Grocers Association (NGA), AFSI certifies over 20,000 food service managers in food safety each year.

Our experience, and that of most food service associations across the nation, has proven that food manager certification training can be accomplished in 8 hours. The IRRC recommended that the Department prescribe minimum required instruction hours (page 9, sec. 76.7). With credible evidence, we ask that this minimum instruction requirement be revised to 8 hours.

The current 15 hour requirement will serve to disqualify the majority of courses in the United States from reciprocity. The majority of the Servsafe (National Restaurant Association) and NGA/AFSI courses nationwide are one-day (8 instruction hours). The exams and the key learning objectives of the one-day courses are identical to the two-day (15 hour) courses.

The following jurisdictions currently accept one-day Servsafe and NGA/AFSI courses:

Bucks County, PA	Utah
Allegheny County, PA	Phoenix, AZ (Maricopa County)
Philadelphia County, PA	Idaho
District of Columbia	Iowa (rule pending)
Connecticut	Florida
New York*	Oklahoma*

National Course Administration Center: One Green Street • Hulmeville, PA 19047
 Phone: 800-723-3873 Fax: 215-757-9521

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Jurisdictions currently accept one-day Servsafe and NGA/AFSI courses (continued):

- Maryland*
- Virginia*
- California
- Mississippi
- Louisiana*
- North Carolina
- Kentucky*
- Delaware (pending)
- US government facilities (under federal/FDA jurisdiction)
- Ohio (voluntary)
- Minnesota
- Wisconsin
- Missouri*
- Alabama*
- South Dakota
- West Virginia*
- Oregon*

*-some areas/establishments exempt

To our knowledge, the only jurisdictions which still require 15 hours of instruction are Illinois and Reno, NV. New Jersey has a 16 hour hospital manager program. Legislation is pending in Texas to change their current 15 hour course requirement to 8 hours and abolish the state exam in favor of the nationally recognized Servsafe and National Assessment Institute exams.

When the Pennsylvania Restaurant Association asked the Department to revise the regulation in order to facilitate reciprocity (page 16, sec. 76.14), the Department obviously did not consider that most Servsafe courses from jurisdictions outside PA are completed in one-day. As identical certificates of completion are issued for 8 hours as for 15 hours, how can the Department verify the number of classroom hours completed by a person seeking certification?

The majority of Pennsylvania food service establishments are under the jurisdiction of local health departments. Bucks, Philadelphia and Allegheny Counties have jurisdiction over approximately 20,000 establishments (combined). Many of these establishments have already been certified under local Servsafe programs using nationally-recognized and Department approved exams with a minimum 8-hour instruction requirement.

Should managers who have successfully completed one-day Servsafe or NGA/AFSI courses and who have passed the same (Department approved) exams sit through an additional 7 hours of instruction?

The requirement of 15 classroom hours (versus 8 hours) effectively doubles the cost of the food manager certification to industry with no additional public health benefit. The higher cost of a 2-day/15 hour class also discourages voluntary participation. The Food Employee Certification Act contains a legislative mandate to encourage voluntary participation.

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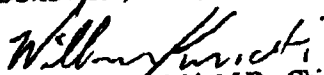
Food manager training and certification must be efficient if it is to be effective. The costs of a 2-day/15 hour food manager certification program cannot be justified, as the majority of food manager certification programs are successfully completed with 8 hours of instruction. We urge the Committee to change the minimum required instruction from 15 hours to 8 hours.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

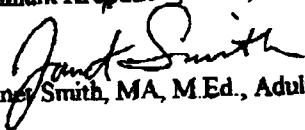
Sincerely,



David Nash, CFPS, President



William Kropnicki, M.D., Chief Medical Advisor



Janet Smith, MA, M.Ed., Adult Education Consultant

- cc: Rep. Matt Wright
- Sen. Robert Tomlinson
- Sen. Joe Conti
- Rep. Paul Clymer
- Rep. David Steil
- Randy St. John, PFMA
- George Zamiska, Philadelphia Department of Health
- Andrew Schafer, Bucks County Department of Health