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**Testimony Before the Public Health Committee
February 20, 2015**

SB 590 AN ACT PERMITTING THE COMMERCIAL USE OF SOUS VIDE

The Connecticut Restaurant Association (CRA) represents over 600 restaurants and affiliated businesses across the state. Our members range from quick serve to casual to fine dining establishments. The Connecticut hospitality industry employs an estimated 145,000 people, making up 9% of our states' workforce. Restaurants are a driving force in the state's economy and generate tremendous tax revenue.

The CRA supports SB 590, AA Permitting the Commercial Use of Sous Vide. Sous Vide is a widely used method of cooking in restaurants whereby the food item is placed in a plastic bag, the air is suctioned out and it is then cooked at a precise temperature for a specific period of time. Allowing this method of cooking at Connecticut's restaurants and clubs will not only allow Chefs to be more creative with their menus and enhance the guest's experience, but it will put Connecticut on the path to catching up with a majority of other states that already allow sous vide.

Connecticut is currently operating under regulations from an outdated food code when compared to most other states. Our food code, while partially based on updates from the 2001 FDA Model Code, is based on the 1976 FDA Model Food Code. A majority of states are operating entirely on updates made to the FDA Model Food Code from 2005 or later. Those thirty-six states operating on the 2005 or more recent code allow the sous vide method of cooking. (The FDA updates the Food Code every four years: 2005, 2009 and 2013.)

If Connecticut were to adopt the 2013 FDA Model Food Code, it would align our state with a majority of other states. The Code would provide consistency with federal standards which are already being implemented in Connecticut through education and industry practice.

We urge the Committee's support.
