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MICHAEL J. MURPHY
ALDERMAN, 10TH DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ald. Michael J. Murphy
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Businesses and officials: Keep Milwaukee's popular food grading system

State board poised to eliminate popular grading system for food establishments; news conference set for Monday

A state board is poised to take action next week that could eliminate the City of Milwaukee's successful food grading system, which has been popular with consumers and establishments. **Business owners will be joined by city officials during a news conference on Monday, November 12th**, to voice their strong opposition to the system's possible elimination.

On Thursday, November 15th the Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection will vote on draft administrative rules recreating Wisconsin Administrative Code Chapter ATCP 75 to bring it into substantial accord with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) 2013 Model Food Code. The proposed draft includes language which prohibits the application of grades or scores to retail food establishments based on inspection reports. The board meeting will be held in the DATCP Boardroom (Board Conference Room 106) at 2811 Agriculture Drive, Madison.

Alderman Michael J. Murphy, who worked with the Health Department to develop and launch the city's successful Food Sanitation Grading System in January, said if approved the DATCP board's action "would eliminate the City of Milwaukee's successful food grading system, which has been widely popular with consumers and establishments while reducing critical food violations for the first time in many years."

Alderman Murphy will host a **news conference at 3:00 p.m. on Monday** to address the possible elimination of the food grading system. Joining the alderman will be **Mayor Tom Barrett**, representatives from the Milwaukee Health Department, **other Common Council members** and several business/restaurant owners, including Brian Ward of **Ward's House of Prime, 540 E. Mason St. – the location of the news conference.**

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“This (action by the board) would be state officials reaching in to Milwaukee and ending a food grading system that is not only popular with customers and the public, but also with restaurant and establishment owners,” Alderman Murphy said.

“We feel strongly that our residents and millions of people who visit our city each year should have a clear way to understand the compliance of restaurants and other food establishments. Food grading puts clear and easy to access information in front of consumers, rather than require them to find and interpret technically complicated reports,” the alderman said.

“If you are a consumer who likes and appreciates the city’s food grading system, I invite you to please join us at Monday’s news conference to voice your support,” Alderman Murphy said.

The Food Sanitation Grading System grades food service establishments on the existing Wisconsin Food Code under which inspections are currently conducted, assigning point values to each violation. Violations that most directly contribute to foodborne illness result in higher deductions.

Establishments are awarded an “A” grade for a score of 80 points or more on a 100 point scale. Scores below 60 points result in a “C” grade, and may prompt temporary closure of an establishment if an imminent health hazard exists.

Consumers: To make your voices heard, please contact **Steve Ingham**, Administrator, Division of Food and Recreational Safety, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection at Steve.Ingham@wisconsin.gov or by phone: (608) 224-4701, or fax: (608) 224-4710.