Gloved rule for handling food being rethought

By Jeremy B. White, Sacramento Bee

Just months after Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law a measure compelling bartenders and chefs to don gloves when handling ready-to-eat food, the bill's author has responded to a food industry uproar by unveiling an effort to undo the change.

"It didn't sound that dissimilar to the existing law, which said that we should minimize hand contact and that there should be good hand-washing procedures," said Assemblyman Richard Pan, D-Sacramento, who wrote the bill.

But soon after it passed, Pan said, "we started hearing from local restaurants, smaller restaurants, and also bartenders about the impact it would have on them."

The glove guideline was mixed into a broader food safety code package that sailed to Brown's desk with no opposition (among other things, the overall bill contemplated that ancient riddle of what, exactly, goes into a hot dog). Strictly speaking, the bill doesn't require gloves. Rather, it prohibits bare-handed contact with foods that are ready to eat.

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