

CITY NEWSPAPER

GOVERNMENT: The not-so-free market

By [Jeremy Moule](#) on October 26, 2010

Democrats in the County Legislature say that Monroe has permission to change how it issues permits for prepared food vendors at county farm markets. | The county currently issues the necessary permits for a period of no longer than 14 days, which can cost a vendor \$1,200 for a full season's worth of permits. | On Monday, Democrats released a letter from the State Department of Health that gives the county the go-ahead to issue permits for up to a year. That's as long as the vendor is operating out of a single market and serving a consistent menu. The letter says the county can do this while state agencies evaluate and implement new guidelines regarding such permits. | Democratic Legislator Willie Lightfoot says that, when it comes time to vote on the county's 2011 budget, he'll introduce an amendment to lower the permit fees. | But county officials do not intend to change the permit process until new regulations are in place, says county spokesperson Noah Lebowitz. | The existing regulations are "legally binding," he says, and the health department's letter amounts to Governor David Paterson's administration committing to actions that'll happen under another.