

A statement from member-owners opposed to this initiative:

We urge all member-owners to **vote “no”** on this referendum:

- Our strength lies in being inclusive and welcoming to all. No one should feel out of place in the Co-op because of their political or religious beliefs. Turning the Co-op into a vehicle for a specific political stance would undermine our shared sense of belonging and move us away from our essential values of tolerance and inclusivity.
- A boycott would be unfairly discriminatory. Many countries, including the United States, face serious criticism for their policies and actions. Singling out one country over others raises difficult questions about consistency and fairness.
- A boycott would harm innocent food producers. Food producers working towards peace in the region are not responsible for government policy, but they would be harmed by this action. For example, a boycott would force us to stop selling organic olive oil produced by *Sindyanna of Galilee*, a female-led collaborative of Arab and Israeli women dedicated to bridging political and cultural divides through food.
- A boycott also carries important practical concerns. The proposal’s language is vague and, according to our leadership, nearly impossible to implement. It could also expose the Co-op to legal and financial risks, threatening our financial health. Perhaps most concerningly, Pennsylvania law prohibits contractual relationships between the state and entities that boycott Israel, meaning this action could prevent us from participating in essential state programs like SNAP, which provides critical food assistance to low-income families.
- Overall, a boycott would change the very nature of the Co-op. Rather than a community space centered on food and connection, it would become a platform for a specific political view—something many members did not join for and may not feel comfortable with.

What about our mission statement, which calls for an “ethical and resilient food infrastructure”?

We understand that many members feel strongly about ethical sourcing and political issues. Those convictions matter. At the same time, our Co-op has long allowed individuals to make their own choices—what to buy and what to avoid—without one group imposing its views on others.

What about the fact that some Jewish people support a boycott? The Jewish people are not a monolith, and everyone is entitled to their views. Yet, according to the Pew Research Center, a large majority of Jews identify with Israel because of their Jewish faith. These people are our members and neighbors, and they should feel welcome in our store.

What about those who oppose Israeli products? Members who oppose Israeli products can continue to act on their beliefs through their own purchasing decisions and through civic engagement beyond the Co-op. Nothing about a “no” vote limits that.

For over 50 years, the East End Food Co-op has been a place where we can gather, disagree respectfully, and still share a sense of community. In this time of deep political division, places like this are increasingly rare. Amid the shouting and finger-pointing, we deeply need places where people with differing views can exist side by side—as neighbors rather than adversaries.

The Co-op is still such a place. That role is special, but it is also fragile. It will endure only if we choose to protect it.

Please join us in voting no.

This statement was written by East End Food Co-op Together, a coalition of member-owners in favor of community and opposed to political boycotts.

Questions? Please contact us at eefctogether@gmail.com