



Chair Burdick and members of the Senate Committee on Finance & Revenue:

I am testifying on behalf of the Oregon Farmers' Markets Association, which represents 120+ farmers' markets and works on behalf of the small farmers who make our farmers' markets the envy of much of the nation.

I also run three farmers' markets in Corvallis and Albany. We have been hosting gleaners since the mid 1990s, and we partner in many other community food security initiatives aimed at increasing access to high-quality locally grown foods among low-income Oregonians.

In 2011 I testified via email in support of retaining the prior donation tax credit and regret that I was not able to make the case in person. As you heard in earlier presentations, the credit was allowed to sunset.

Donations from small farmers did not grind to a halt when the tax credit died; It is evident farmers are not acting solely out of self-interest. What we don't know is how much more we could achieve for hungry and food insecure Oregonians if we enact an improved program that is more functional and fiscally responsible.

One improvement is that the bill eliminates an extra layer of paperwork that was filed with the Oregon Department of Agriculture in the old program. Under SB 430, farmers can file directly on tax forms.

The example of gleaners doing collection at farmers' markets is actually the exception in terms of cost to farmers, because the product was already picked and farmers don't have to transport it again.

Yet if a farmer has a crop that is uneconomic to harvest, let alone transport, food banks are less likely to get that donation without some help with the costs.

Even as a farmers' market manager I know that wholesale growers can sometimes get stuck with a crop at maturity that will not achieve its intended sales channel. Lopsided cannery contracts and fickle grocery buyers are but two of the stories I hear.

Our food system is broken in many ways, and it cannot be fixed solely through the emergency food system. But we can be proud of the way Oregon Food Bank and its affiliates are working to improve the quality as well as the quantity of food available to those who seek help feeding their families.

Let's help our farmers and our food banks do more to get fresh, nutritious Oregon-grown foods into the hands of hunger and food-insecure families.