



March 15, 2013

Co-Chair Betsy Johnson  
Co-Chair Bob Jenson  
Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation and Economic Development  
900 Court St. NE, Room H-178  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson and Jenson, and members of the Subcommittee:

Whole Foods Market strongly supports the Oregon Housing and Community Services proposed budget in HB 5015 and the expanded funding it can provide to the Oregon Food Bank.

The Oregon Food Bank (OFB) plays a critical role in the public-private partnership to address hunger in Oregon. The grocery industry participates in OFB's Fresh Alliance program, which recovers food products from store shelves to make way for new food products. Last year, we joined many other grocers in donating over 3 million pounds of recovered food products from grocery store shelves, which went to food banks and into the mouths of hungry Oregonians. Last year, our stores also donated \$20,000 to this essential organization to support food purchases for food pantries in local schools to help ensure healthy options, such as produce.

In Oregon, the private sector is deeply committed to supporting the OFB network. Currently, 68 percent of all donations to the OFB network come from the private sector through donations and food drives. At the same time, the dynamics of providing that food have become increasingly more challenging and complex. Hunger is more chronic, and isn't just an issue that impacts Oregon during recessions. Food production costs are also increasing for everyone, so the dollars OFB receives simply can't go as far to provide the type of nutritional food that truly alleviates hunger.

The \$3 million requested for the Oregon Hunger Response Fund represents a modest increase of \$375,000 per year for the next biennium, but the impact is significant. That additional \$375,000 per year translates into five to six *million* pounds of food for the biennium. In fact, OFB must purchase 21% of the food it needs

The Legislative Assembly is a vital part of this successful public-private partnership and we strongly encourage your support for Oregon Food Bank funding in HB 5015.

Sincerely,



Bruce Silverman  
Vice President, Pacific Northwest Region

Cc: Tiffany Koss, Committee Assistant