

March 19th, 2013



To: Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair
Representative Bob Jensen, Co-Chair
Members of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Transportation
and Economic Development

AFFILIATE OFFICES:

ALASKA
CALIFORNIA
WASHINGTON

On behalf of Fred Meyer and Safeway, we urge your support of HB 5015. Fighting hunger in Oregon requires a broad partnership of all sectors – private, charitable and public – combining resources so that no Oregonian goes hungry. Thousands of families, children, and seniors are served through the Oregon Hunger Response Fund. The fund is the state's contribution to the public-private partnership in food banks to effectively address hunger and its root causes.

The funds are used to purchase and store bulk foods, both frozen and dry, and help offset storage and transportation costs. These foods, such as rice, beans, and frozen vegetables, are shipped to regional food banks throughout Oregon and become the building blocks of nutrition in emergency food boxes and meal programs. Last year, the Oregon Food Bank Network purchased 21 percent of the food it distributes, using hard-earned funds from donors and other sources, to ensure a nutritious supply of food.

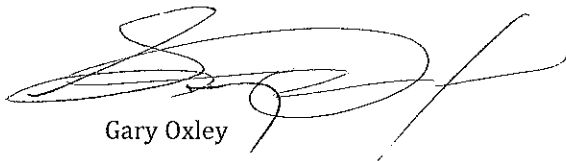
There is a regional food bank for every state legislative district, every county and every city. It is challenging to ensure every part of our state has access to emergency food services, and it requires resources. Working with the Oregon Food Bank's many partners takes a lot of food, fuel for transporting the food, large capacity refrigeration for storing perishable goods, and staff. The grocery industry understands these costs well. 945 local non-profits distribute food from the Oregon Food Bank Network to individuals and families they serve.

In the grocery industry, we participate in Oregon Food Bank's Fresh Alliance program, which recovers food products from store shelves to make way for new food products. Last year, the private sector contributed 68 percent of the Oregon Food Bank Network's food supply, including food industry donations and food drives from community organizations. Over 3 million pounds of recovered food products from grocery store shelves went to food banks and into the mouths of hungry Oregonians.

In addition, the Oregon Food Bank Network distributed 81 million pounds of food for the second consecutive year. This includes a record 1,117,000 emergency food boxes distributed to families experiencing hunger throughout the state. They are anticipating the same level of need this year.

Food donations from the food industry have been largest source of food for the Oregon Food Bank Network. The Oregon Food Bank will continue to put forth efforts to help the food industry find ways to increase its food donations, including recovering food from grocery stores, food processors and farms, but the state of Oregon's partnership is critical more than ever. This is why the Oregon Food Bank Network is asking the state of Oregon to provide an additional \$750,000 for the Oregon Hunger Response Fund in the 2013-15 state budget. That's \$375,000 more per year to help the Oregon Food Bank Network leverage more resources and to serve more families experiencing hunger throughout our state. We support the Oregon Food Bank Network's request and hope the state will likewise.

Sincerely,



Gary Oxley