



and the Oregon Food Bank Network  
Serving Oregon and  
Clark County, WA

**Testimony in support of Senate Bill 700**  
**Senate Human Services and Early Childhood**  
**Submitted by Phillip Kennedy-Wong, Policy Advocate**  
**April 2, 2015**

***Mission:***

*To eliminate  
hunger and its  
root causes. . .  
because no  
one should  
be hungry.*

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The Oregon Food Bank Network believes the best way to fight hunger is through healthy nutritious foods. Increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables is especially critical for low-income seniors and mothers participating in the federal WIC program. The proposed amendment to Senate Bill 700 will accomplish that and make Oregon competitive for a federal Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grant, which would incentivize fresh produce purchases.

Seniors are the fastest growing population in the country. Roughly nine percent are food insecure. They face increased health risks as a result that include asthma, depression, heart attacks, and heart failure. Many seniors can be reluctant to go to food pantries because of personal shame. While transportation is still a need for many seniors, the Farm Direct Nutrition program gives seniors the dignity to purchase fresh produce at farmers markets and stands.

Food insecure families struggle to maintain a consistent healthy diet as the result of having limited financial resources. More often than not, these families have to buy cheap food, often low in nutrition just to make their money stretch. This means foods that are high in fat, sugar, sodium, preservatives, and empty calories. The impact to family health can include high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. For children, poor diet can contribute to delayed cognitive development and behavioral or emotional problems. Imagine a young mother facing these choices.

Finally, the toxic stress of poverty and hunger can make it difficult for low income seniors and families on the WIC program to always have the wherewithal to distinguish healthy food options. Shopping at farmers markets and stands in the Farm Direct Nutrition program makes it easier.

Thank you for your consideration.

