



Serving Columbia County

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March 27, 2017

The Honorable Alissa Keny-Guyer, Chair
Oregon House Committee on Human Services & Housing
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Members of the Oregon House Committee on Human Services & Housing:

Subject: HB 2881/Oregon Hunger Response Fund

We ask you to invest in the Oregon Hunger Response Fund with HB 2881 and in the 2017-19 Department of Human Services budget. This important fund helps Oregon's 20 regional food banks acquire and distribute food to over 950 local agencies across the Oregon helping families during times of economic hardship and communities struck by natural disasters. Columbia Pacific Food Bank supports this request as a necessary measure to help stop the rise of hunger in Oregon.

The Oregon Hunger Response Fund is the state government's sole food assistance program not connected to a federal program like SNAP, WIC or Farm Direct Nutrition. While federal food programs play a huge role in Oregon, they are clearly not enough to stop Oregon from being the only state in the nation to see a rise in hunger. USDA released its [Food Security Report](#) this summer showing a statistically significant increase in Oregon's hunger rate on a three year average.

Oregon has a hunger crisis. We are the only state in the nation that experienced an increase in its hunger rate in the last three years based on the recently released report. The number of people and the volume of food distributed in Oregon's food bank network has remained at recession levels unbeknownst to the public. Many including private donors assume that hunger has decreased. Food is the cornerstone to good health, educational success, and a productive labor force. It is a basic human need just like housing.

For too long, Oregon families have struggled to know when and where their next meal will come from. This is very troubling especially given that the nation has recovered from the Great Recession. Over 600,000 Oregonians are food insecure, especially in rural Oregon and communities of color. An average of 260,000 Oregonians each month access food services through the Oregon Food Bank Network at one of the 950 partner agencies.

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"BECAUSE NO ONE SHOULD BE HUNGRY!"



United Way
of Columbia County

Oregon's network of regional food banks is a partnership, supported by private and public sectors with community and faith based organizations and an army of volunteers. The Oregon Hunger Response Fund is the state's contribution to this effort. The Fund is critical to helping the Oregon Food Bank Network get food to Columbia Pacific Food Bank so that we can serve over 8,000 individuals in Columbia County

Please join Columbia Pacific Food Bank and the Oregon Food Bank Network in the fight against hunger in our state. With a strong investment in the Oregon Hunger Response Fund, we can end hunger in Oregon.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Casey Wheeler". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Casey Wheeler
Executive Director

cc The Honorable Tina Kotek, Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives
The Honorable Peter Courtney, Senate President
State Senator Richard Devlin, Co-Chair, Joint Ways & Means Committee
State Rep. Nancy Nathanson, Co-Chair, Joint Ways & Means Committee
State Senator Betsy Johnson
State Representative Brad Witt