

House Committee on Human Services and Housing
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Keny Guyer, Vice-Chair Olson, Vice-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

FOOD for Lane County is the regional food bank serving all of Lane County. One in three Lane County residents is eligible for food assistance, while one in 6 Oregonians experience food insecurity. Although we continue to see improvements in our economy, the need for emergency food assistance has not decreased as much as we would have hoped. In fact, as hunger has declined across the entire country, Oregon was the only state to see a statistically significant increase in hunger according to the most recent USDA Food Insecurity report. Over 78,000 unique individuals accessed an emergency food box in Lane County, at least one time over the past year.

When we ask recipients of emergency food assistance what would help them not need our services, for the last 4 years recipients have pointed to higher wages or employment, and affordable housing. Startling as it is, one child in every Lane County classroom experiences homelessness and Lane County ranks the second highest in the state with the number of severely rent burdened individuals, meaning they are paying more than 50 percent of their incomes on rent. It is no wonder that our service levels have remained so high despite an improving economy.

We believe that every Lane County resident should have access to the food and nutrition necessary to live a healthy life. We also believe that every Lane County resident should have a safe and stable place to call home. Having access to affordable housing, we believe, will enable the people we serve to be more food secure and will assist in lessening the lines at our food pantries and meal sites across our county.

An increase in the Document Recording fee, the state's only direct revenue source to serve the continuum of housing needs is a solution to the housing crisis that we feel strongly about. We are asking the committee to support HB 4007, which will increase the Document Recording Fee by \$55 dollars. Revenue generated from this fee goes towards the Emergency Housing Account (10%), which many of our partnering agency shelters utilize to help individuals both prevent and escape homelessness. The funds from this fee also assist our affordable housing partners, like Cornerstone Community Housing and St. Vincent de Paul help build desperately needed affordable housing options in our county (76%), and other community partners, like NEDCO assist individuals in first time home buyer courses and supports (14%).

An increase in the Document Recording fee will surely help address the housing crisis we are experiencing in our community, strengthen our partner's abilities to meet the basic need of providing transitional and stable housing for recipients of our services, and prevent the tragic choice of having a roof over one's head or putting food on the table....a choice no Oregonian should ever have to make.

Passing HB 4007 will help reduce hunger and food insecurity in Lane County and across the state, and will make a considerable, often life changing difference for the families and individuals we serve. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Beverlee Potter, Executive Director
FOOD for Lane County