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FOOD for Lane County is an equal opportunity  
provider and a member of



United Way  
of Lane County



April 4, 2019

Dear Chair and members of the committee,

Chair Witt, co-chairs and members of the committee.

The amendment in HB 2113 to allow for a reduced price fishing and or hunting license is a creative and innovative strategy for assisting low-income Oregonians in meeting their food needs. Hunger across the state continues to remain above pre-recession levels, and hunger in Lane County is the second highest in the state.

In Lane County, forty-four percent of households do not earn enough to cover their basic needs. This is according to Lane County's 2016 ALICE Report from the United Way. Thirty-seven percent of Lane County residents qualify for an emergency food box (Census 2016), and thousands more are one unexpected expense away from losing their home or not being able to pay for heat, food or medical bills. The economy is improving, but not for everyone. Food insecurity remains a challenge where economic recovery is slow and uneven. Many people in Lane County and across the state continue to struggle because of low wages, reduced work hours, depleted savings and increased living costs, primarily with housing.

During food system assessments in Oakridge and McKenzie Bridge, community participants were surveyed on how they go about meeting their household food needs and to list barriers to meeting those needs. We learned from members of those communities that a fifth of respondents claimed that hunting is a primary source of food, and close to quarter said that fishing is also a primary source. We were also told that one of the biggest challenges for hunting and fishing is the cost of a license, which has really gone up in the last few years. The same findings were true in our organizing efforts with communities like Blue River and Leaburg along the McKenzie River.

Having additional opportunities for low-income community members to gain access to food in these rural and remote communities is essential to helping reduce food insecurity. Reduced price hunting and fishing fees is yet another way to meet basic food needs, celebrate and be included in community culture, to share generational skills and knowledge, and help promote a sustainable connection to natural resources and the environment.

It is for these reasons that we strongly support the amendment in HB 2113 to allow more community members access to affordable hunting and fishing licenses. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,  
Kara Smith,  
Community Engagement and Advocacy Coordinator