



To: House Committee on Housing
From: Chris Baker, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon
RE: Testimony in support of HB 3322
Date: April 6, 2021

Chair Fahey, Vice Chairs, and members of the committee,

My name is Chris Baker, I provide administrative support to the state's Hunger Task Force, and I am the Legislative Strategist at Hunger-Free Oregon. This testimony is in support of HB 3322.

We support policies that ensure Oregonians have equitable access to the resources and opportunities needed in order to afford life's essentials. We focus on ensuring that nutrition support programs are adequate, effective and equitable when we need them, and we believe people most impacted by hunger are leaders in designing and enacting solutions.

The experience of hunger, though always urgent, has become more widespread than ever before. An estimated 1 million Oregonians can't afford the food we need, twice as many of us as before the pandemic. The rate of hunger is twice as high for people who face systemic inequity, particularly Black, Indigenous and Latinx Oregonians.

If passed, HB 3322 would allow the production of food in planned communities by lot owners and their tenants. As we take unprecedented measures to protect our communities, our elders, and our neighbors, this legislative session should consider all possible strategies to ensure Oregonians have access to nutritious food during this crisis.

We see HB 3322 as a strategy for reducing food insecurity. Home grown food reduces food cost, which is especially important for families who are trying to make ends meet. Participants of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (also known as SNAP/food stamps) can use their Oregon Trail Card to [purchase edible plants, veggie starts and seeds](#)¹. As an added benefit, SNAP participants who shop at farmers markets can stretch their benefit dollars even further by participating in the [Double Up Food Bucks program](#) at participating farmers markets. Double Up Food Bucks will match up to \$10 a day on any SNAP-eligible purchase (this includes edible plant starts)².

¹ Salzman, N. (2017, February 21). Using snap benefits to grow your own food. Retrieved April 05, 2021, from <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2011/07/06/using-snap-benefits-grow-your-own-food>

² How Double Up Food Bucks Works at Farmers Markets. (n.d.). Retrieved April 05, 2021, from <https://doubleuporegon.org/markets/>



For every \$1 dollar spent on seeds and plant starts, home gardeners can grow an average of \$25 worth of produce. Growing food from seeds and plants makes SNAP benefits last longer, allowing recipients to double the value of their benefits over time. Supplementing SNAP with homegrown food makes it possible for families to buy food products that they wouldn't normally be able to afford³.

In 2018, in preparation for the [2019-2022 Plan to End Hunger report](#)⁴, the Oregon Hunger Task Force administered a statewide "Plan to End Hunger" survey, where we received responses from more than 1,000 Oregonians. Access to residential food farming was listed among the *top ten* solutions to food insecurity by residents all across the state.

Everyone has the right to be free from hunger. HB 3322 is a clear and effective policy to build food security, with no cost to the state. It will help ensure equitable access to the freedom of growing nourishing food, no matter which neighborhood we live in. Please pass HB 3322.

³ Salzman, N. (2017, February 21). Using snap benefits to grow your own food. Retrieved April 05, 2021, from <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2011/07/06/using-snap-benefits-grow-your-own-food>

⁴ Killeen, A., O'Donnell-King, E., & Baker, C. (n.d.). *The Oregon Hunger Task Force 2019-2022 Plan to End Hunger* (Issue brief).

doi:<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/587bc89edb29d69a1a2839f2/t/5cfb01e440541300017f4889/1559953905466/2019PlantoEndHunger.pdf>