

TO: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
FROM: Kim Olson, Community Philanthropy Manager, Oregon Food Bank
RE: Support for SB 479
DATE: January 23, 2023



Chair Golden and Members of the Committee,

Oregon Food Bank's mission is to end hunger and its root causes. We believe food is a human right. And we know that ending hunger requires a clear vision and bold action, with all of us working together to provide nutritious, culturally-relevant food today and to address the root cause of hunger.

We urge support for SB 479 to expand the options and availability to donate meat into Oregon's emergency food system. Oregon Food Bank has long supported the establishment of a state meat inspection program, and we are thrilled the legislature established the program in 2020. Donation of amenable species (domesticated animals) is currently limited to the few facilities that are USDA-certified. This significantly limits both our supply of donated meat and the ability of Regional Food Banks to set-up local purchasing agreements with ranchers. Expanding meat donation options to allow for the establishment of state authorized facilities will make it easier for Oregon meat producers to donate to Oregonians experiencing hunger.

Even as we begin to recover from the pandemic, Oregon Food Bank's traditional sources of funding and food donations continue to face disruption:

- Donations from large-scale food producers (e.g. General Mills) to Oregon Food Bank have dropped by roughly 50% over the course of the pandemic, with no return to normal donation levels in sight;
- A critical USDA program called The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) has become unreliable due to reductions in funding and supply chain disruptions – resulting in inconsistent federal food supplies reaching Oregon;
- Due to the rise in global food costs, Oregon Food Bank's ability to purchase food for distribution has been weakened.

To address these disruptions and address the gap in Oregon's emergency food supply, we will need a community wide effort. Innovative solutions like SB 479 will be a key part in helping us meet that need.

We appreciate Sen Hansell bringing this proposal forward. Oregon Food Bank offers our full support and **we urge a "yes" vote on SB 479.**

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