



Tillamook County Board of Commissioners

201 Laurel Avenue, Tillamook, OR 97141

Phone: 503-842-3403

Erin D. Skaar, Chair

April 24, 2023

Re: Senate Bill 610 – Food for all Oregonians

Chairs Steiner and Sanchez; Vice Chairs Girod, Gomberg and Smith; Members of the Committee:

My name is Erin Skaar, and I am a Tillamook County Commissioner. I am writing to you today to express my support for Senate Bill 610, Food for all Oregonians, which would ensure that all of my constituents, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

Hunger was a crisis in my county before the pandemic and we know that the situation has only become worse.

Though the work of supporting this bill I have learned that immigrants, refugees and Compact of Free Association (COF) community members, in particular have long faced higher rates of hunger and poverty in Oregon. And the fact that Latinx and Pacific Islander Oregonians experienced hunger at twice the rate of white Oregonians pre-pandemic really struck home with me.

Tillamook County does not have a diverse population, but we do have significant populations of both Latinx and Pacific Islander Oregonians. As a small rural community, we have a limited number of service agencies to support those struggling with hunger in our area. Even more important to this discussion is that we lack any culturally specific food organizations serving either the Latinx or Pacific Islander populations. Without having safe, culturally specific support these populations are very unlikely to know where to turn for help when they experience hunger. The most suggested resource is SNAP, for which they may not qualify.

We know that when we all have access to food, we're all better off. Senate Bill 610 will allow kids to do better in school, our families' health and wellbeing improves, and our economy thrives through the support of local businesses. This will be true in every corner of Oregon – in rural, urban, and suburban communities alike. When all of our neighbors are getting the food that they need, all of Oregon thrives.

This is why I urge you to vote yes on Senate Bill 610. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Erin D. Skaar".

Erin D. Skaar, Chair