



NeighborImpact

Supporting People, Strengthening Communities.

May 5, 2023

Capital Construction Committee

Dear Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey and members of the Committee:

I write in support of a request by regional food banks in Oregon for \$22 million in one-time infrastructure investments into regional regional food banks across the state.

I am the executive director of NeighborImpact serving Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. Through our network of over 58 local partner agencies, we provide food for 60,000 individuals, families, and seniors every month. Our mobile pantry brings food directly to residents in underserved areas, meeting people where they are. Refrigerated and fully loaded with fresh produce and nutrition, meal-building food, the mobile pantry services over 3,000 Central Oregonians a month with a shopping-style distribution which reduces waste by ensuring that recipients get what they need and want to support themselves and their families with food choices that are medically, culturally and lifestyle appropriate to them.

The regional food banks are under enormous strain right now. My organization alone has seen monthly use jump from 16,000 individuals in 2020 to 60,000 individuals in 2023. Our operating budgets are very challenged and your support of this ask, which is needed to address inadequate infrastructure, should not come as a trade-off for additional and new operating support or food purchase funding. The three elements—infrastructure, operations (including labor and transportation) and food purchase form an interlocking triangle. All three elements are necessary if food is to be distributed in the volume needed to stave off a return to Oregon’s “Hungriest State in the Nation” status, which we shed not so long ago.

NeighborImpact would use its portion of these funds to help fund our Food Program’s Mobile Pantry and to purchase equipment and support our operations and the operational needs of our partners. Your approval of this funding will flow through to 58 different agencies in our region, which covers a geography the size of New Jersey.

I urge you to support this important request.

Sincerely,

Scott Cooper, Executive Director

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