

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
SB 108
Testimony in Support

Chair Meek, members of the committee,

My name is Helle Ruddenklau and my husband, Bruce, and I farm in Yamhill and Polk counties, and I support SB 108.

We have a diverse cropping farm with 7 – 10 different crops every year. Included in that mix is generally green beans and sometimes sweet corn grown under contract with National Frozen Foods out of Albany.

Normally we would raise the crop and then National Frozen Foods comes and harvests it and transport it to one of their processing plants. However, I heard about Farmers Ending Hunger, and their effort to facilitate food donations directly from farmers to those most in need, and we have now been participating for a number of years.

It's not actually that straight forward for us to donate fresh produce. I have to drive our pickup and trailer to Salem to pick up the empty totes. I bring those to the field and the crew from National Frozen Foods bring a partial load over and we carefully load it into the totes. I then deliver the filled totes to the food banks. In our case, I normally deliver two totes to YCAP in McMinnville, six totes to Marion Polk Food Share and finally two totes to Hope Station, both in Salem. It involves about 150 miles of driving, at least 10 hours of my time, plus the time of the National Frozen Foods crew that help load it.

We are obviously not doing it for the money! We believe in this program and want to participate. We donate prime crop that otherwise would have gone for processing. As a mom, I want to donate fresh produce. I know my kids prefer it and I want the experience of eating prime, fresh green beans or sweet corn available to all kids in this state.

Oregon a state of agricultural abundance, and knowing kids experience hunger breaks my heart. I hope you will extend the program and maybe even increase the tax credit to 25% to encourage other farmers to participate. I know it is a good deal for Oregon and I know it is good for the kids.









Picked up totes on August 29th (Thursday before Labor Day) (~3 hours)

Beans picked and loaded into totes late afternoon on Labor Day, Sept 2nd (~3 hours)

Delivered morning of September 3rd (~4 hours)

Two totes to YCAP in McMinnville (966 lbs), 6 totes to Marion-Polk Food Share in Salem (3,118 lbs), 2 totes to Hope's Station in Salem (1,039 lbs).

10 hrs of my time (plus crew for loading) and 150 miles for the pickup and trailer.