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TO: Senate Committee on Human Services
FROM: Gorge Grown Food Network
SUBJECT: Yes on SB 611

Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah Sullivan and I am the Executive Director at Gorge Grown Food Network. Gorge Grown is in **strong support of Senate Bill 611**, Food For All Oregonians, which would ensure youth and elder Oregonians, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to thrive.

A survey conducted by the Columbia Gorge Health Council found that **1 in 3 residents of the Columbia River Gorge are food insecure**, with even higher rates among marginalized groups—**53% of Columbia Gorge farmworkers are suffering from hunger**. Our farmworkers are the backbone of the orchard industry in the Gorge. They pay taxes and contribute to feeding Oregonians and the world, and yet many are ineligible for food assistance. This is unjust. **We believe everyone has a right to nutritious, quality food regardless of their citizenship.**

Gorge Grown Food Network works with the Farmers Market Fund to provide Double Up Food Bucks at the Hood River Farmers Market. Through this program, a customer using SNAP is able to triple their \$20 EBT purchase to receive \$60 in funds to spend at the market. This program has incentivized SNAP recipients to shop locally which **directly benefits local farmers**. With inflation raising the cost of food everywhere, **SNAP use at our farmers markets has increased by over 40% in the last few years**. Quotes from SNAP shoppers:

"The program allows me to buy veggies that I'm proud to cook!"

"Double Up Food Bucks makes me feel like my community is looking out for me, and allows me to eat healthier, fresher foods while getting to know my local farmers."

Lawmakers in Oregon have the opportunity to continue – and expand – SNAP to reduce hunger in our state. I urge you to do the right thing and vote YES on SB 611.

Thank you,
Sarah Sullivan
Gorge Grown Food Network

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