



Feb 6, 2019

Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: HB 5002

Co-Chair Taylor and Reardon and members of the committee

Oregon Food Bank believes that no one should be hungry and that hunger starves the human spirit. We provide food assistance to anyone who needs it through our network of regional food banks, pantries and emergency meal sites. In an average month, an estimated 260,000 people in Oregon and Clark County, Washington receive food from a pantry and the Network distributes close to a 100 million pounds of food annually.

We are a part of Oregon's food system and as such, we also rely on key food safety services provided by the Oregon Department of Agriculture. They provide crucial inspections, and we work in close coordination on food safety recalls. We are here today to express our support for their hard work in ensuring our food is safe and to ask the Committee to adopt Policy Package 210 to ensure the Department has adequate funds on hand to address a food safety crisis.

Food safety is paramount to the work we do. Our community members rely on our services to put food on the table, and we take great steps to ensure that the food we provide is safe. We know we serve vulnerable populations and are always concerned about the higher susceptibility of people experiencing food insecurity to foodborne illnesses. Hunger and health are deep connected. Having a healthy body and mind require adequate and nutritious foods. We know that when people don't have enough food or eat food with low-nutritional value because it is cheaper, they are more likely to have negative health outcomes and compromised immune systems. In addition, the Oregon Food Bank Network serves a disproportionate number of populations that are more susceptible to foodborne illnesses such as households with young children and seniors. We need Oregon to have a strong food safety system and rely on the expertise, guidance and work of the Oregon Department of Agriculture to carry this out.

I also have had the privilege to serve on the Oregon Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Advisory Committee since it was formed in 2015. We have greatly appreciated this continued space to learn, advise and build relationships with staff and other stakeholders.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Anneliese Koehler
Public Policy Advocate, Oregon Food Bank

CONTACT INFORMATION

Anneliese Koehler
Oregon Food Bank
7900 NE 3rd Drive
Portland, OR 97211
akoehler@oregonfoodbank.org

oregonfoodbank.org

