



February 24, 2023

To Chair Gelser Blouin, Vice-Chair Robinson, Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Food Roots, I am writing to express **support for Senate Bill 610**, Food For All Oregonians which would ensure all of our neighbors, regardless of immigration status, have access to the food they need to keep them and their families healthy.

Hunger was a crisis in our communities well before the pandemic, and the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 have fallen hardest on newly-arrived Oregonians. Immigrants, refugees and Compact of Free Association (COFA) community members, in particular, have long faced higher rates of hunger and poverty in Oregon.

We believe this bill will greatly impact our community members in Tillamook county, as the majority of those we serve are facing health and economic disparities, and all public schools we partner with are Title I schools, with an average of 61% of students eligible for free or reduced price meals. Furthermore, 13% of Tillamook County residents, and 21% of our children experience food insecurity; 17% of this population receive SNAP benefits. SNAP is the primary source of nutrition assistance for many low-income people, allowing them to buy adequate food, reduce poverty, and help stabilize the economy during recessions. Therefore, expanding these benefits to everyone who is in need would not only significantly improve the lives of those who are receiving the benefits but everyone in our community is better off.

SB 610 will allow kids to do better in school, our families' health and well-being 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 we urge your yes vote on SB 610. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline Parks".

Caroline Parks
Programs Manager, Food Roots