



NEHALEM BAY
HEALTH CENTER & PHARMACY
COMPASSIONATE COMMUNITY CARE

230 Rowe Street | PO Box 176 | Wheeler, OR 97147 | 1-800-368-5182 | Fax: 1-844-712-3001 | nehalembayhealth.org

February 27, 2023

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

My name is Janet Orozco Ortiz, I live in Tillamook County, and I work for a federally qualified health center. I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 610, Food For All Oregonians and would like to share my personal lived experience.

I was raised in a rural community in Tillamook County with limited resources. Throughout my childhood, my family experienced food insecurity. Often, we would visit local food banks and pantries, but sometimes it just wasn't enough. We had to make ends meet with what was provided to us and we were grateful to have food on the table. Food insecurity can cause serious health issues when people have to decide between spending money on healthy foods or paying rent. My family had to decide whether we wanted a roof over our heads, gas to get to work, pay monthly bills or purchase healthy foods. We were unable to purchase culturally appropriate foods and nutritious foods which then resulted in family members developing chronic diseases. Throughout my school years, I had the privilege of being a part of the reduced lunch program, and I knew that this wasn't the case for every student. Food insecurity is a problem and it is challenging for children to learn and grow.

Thousands of families are excluded from food assistance programs and my family is one of them. We were found not eligible simply because of our immigration status. As a child, I didn't understand why we were being turned away for seeking food resources if all we were asking was for food assistance. I remember the devastating look on my parents faces as they were told time after time that they could not apply for SNAP due to their immigration status.

Food is a human right and passing Senate Bill 610, Food For All Oregonians will ensure anyone can apply for benefits and access the food that we need. Together we can build a future where everyone in Oregon has access to food. One where everyone has the same access to food assistance programs regardless of our place of birth, immigration, or documentation status.

I urge your support on Senate Bill 610. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Janet Orozco Ortiz, NCMA, CHW
Outreach & Enrollment Navigator
Nehalem Bay Health Center & Pharmacy