

TO: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
FROM: Mason Durfee
RE: State Budget
DATE: April 7, 2023

Honorable Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mason Durfee and I am a resident of SE Portland. I believe that now is the time for the state to make critical investments that will support Oregonians to access culturally familiar, safe, healthy, and affordable food. Therefore, I am writing to request your support for the following funding priorities in the 2023 budget:

- **The Oregon Hunger Response Fund to maintain funding for emergency food distribution efforts statewide**
- **Funding for critical food purchases through the Oregon Department of Human Services.**
- **Strengthening Oregon's food distribution network to make one-time infrastructure investments in regional food banks to support Oregonians facing hunger.**
- **Support for Food for all Oregonians to create a state-funded program that eliminates exclusions to SNAP and makes applying for assistance more welcoming**
- **Support for increasing funding for Double Up Food Bucks Oregon - a triple win that supports SNAP shoppers to access fresh produce and multiplies the economic impact of our local businesses and farmers**

Oregonians facing food insecurity deserve access to food resources that maintain their dignity, choice, and stability. As communities face the high costs of food and housing, the household budget is stretched even further. The above priorities can address these immediate challenges and create a buffer against the ongoing impacts that climate change, severe weather events, and health crises are having on our most important resource - the food supply chain.

By championing these priorities, the state will support every link in the food supply chain - from farmers to frontline workers, food distributors, retail food stores, and regional food banks. At a time when Oregonians face unprecedented health, food access, and economic challenges these critical resources will provide the support our communities need to emerge stronger in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you and I urge you to support these important requests.

Sincerely,
Mason Durfee
Portland, OR