

Community Connection



Of Northeast Oregon, Inc.
Baker, Grant, Union, and Wallowa Counties

Community Action Agency
Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC)
Area Agency on Aging (Dist.13)
Housing Counseling Agency
Public Transit Provider

TO: Joint Subcommittee On Capital Construction
FROM: Audrey Smith, Regional Food Bank Manager, Community Connection of Northeast Oregon
RE: HB 5030
DATE: May 5, 2023

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Committee

My name is Audrey Smith, Regional Food Bank Manager of Community Connection of Northeast Oregon serving Baker, Grant, Union, and Wallowa Counties. We distribute food through 17 food pantries and 11 Harvest Share sites, moving 1.1 million pounds of food each year. Nearly 44% of the people served by our network of food banks are children.

Our regional food bank network is requesting \$22M for one-time infrastructure investments into our regional food banks across the state. This request will help strengthen our statewide distribution network and support Oregonians facing hunger. Funds will allow us to meet the increased needs, while strengthening our statewide network to ensure food remains available to all who need it, for years to come.

Community Connection of Northeast Oregon would use its portion of these funds to support fresh food distribution to rural, underserved communities. This includes funding for a produce delivery route in Baker, Wallowa, and Grant Counties, and pantry support funds for freezers, coolers and delivery vehicles. Funds will also support warehouse necessities such as a loading dock upgrade, freezer and cooler maintenance, a barcode scanning system, equipment, and a heating and cooling system.

We are mindful as we make this request that food banking alone is not a permanent solution to hunger. Hunger is not just an empty stomach or an individual experience. We are encouraged that the legislature is also taking action to address the reasons why so many people seek emergency food.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. We urge you to support this important request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Audrey Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Audrey Smith
Regional Food Bank Manager