



To: Senate Committee on Human Services

From: Christina Bodamer, Senior Regional Lead Government Relations, American Heart Association

Re: SB 452

January 23, 2025

Although diet quality has been steadily improving in the U.S. during the past two decades, overall dietary quality is still poor. Most significantly, there is a widening gap associated with income. Without access to healthy foods, a nutritious diet and good health are out of reach, and as a result, the number of diet-related illnesses – especially among children – are on the rise.

The number one barrier for local food pantries to distribute fresh foods is inadequate cold storage equipment and equipment to move it from the producers to the food pantry sites.

There is a clear need to improve cold storage infrastructure in the Marion Polk Food Bank network. This need is especially critical at the local food pantry level, where it is common to see household refrigerators strung together, a costly and inefficient way to store large quantities of perishable products.

Food assistance is often necessary for individuals that are SNAP participants, as the benefits provided typically last only 2-3 weeks, leaving many to seek additional food from emergency food resources, like the food Bank.

Regional food banks, like the Marion County Food Bank, has the ability to increase their fresh food distribution in Oregon, with a little help from the legislature to increase their footprint and ability to secure more fresh food from food processors, producers and their grocery recovery program if they are given additional resources to do.



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