

TO: House Committee on Climate, Energy, and Environment
FROM: Sammi Teo, Public Policy Advocate, Oregon Food Bank
RE: Support for HB 3170, Resilience Hubs and Networks
DATE: February 4, 2025



Chair Lively, Vice-Chairs Gamba and Levy, and members of the committee,

Oregon Food Bank's mission is "to eliminate hunger and its root causes... *because no one should be hungry.*" We pursue this goal in two key ways: we foster community connections to help people access nutritious food today, and we advocate to change policies that drive hunger and poverty. Last year alone, through our network of over 1,200+ community-based food pantries, meal sites, and programs, we distributed over 91 million meals (nearly 110 million pounds of food). This massive scale food distribution effort served 2.5 million visits at our food assistance sites, marking a 31% increase compared to the prior year.

Oregon Food Bank supports HB 3170, which will help Oregonians prepare for, thrive through, and recover from climate-related emergencies and other disasters. HB 3170 would allow the Office of Resilience and Emergency Management (OREM) to be able to continue providing grants, support, and technical assistance directly to communities to build and implement Resilience Hubs and Networks throughout the state.

Resilience Hubs provide basic resources and equipment for crises— ranging from a physical structure to a supply site with resources. Resilience Networks are groups of people/entities that help fill gaps between government agencies and vulnerable communities. These trusted places and networks of care are designed by and for communities to cultivate a sense of safety and empowerment when disaster strikes.

HB 3170 comes at a critical time, as it is no secret that Oregon's emergency management services are stretched thin. Across the state, BIPOC, low-income, rural, and disabled communities are hit hardest in times of disaster. Oregon needs OREM to be able to continue to provide this critical resource and service.

Coordination between community groups and local governments is critical for disaster preparation and resilience.

We are stronger when we work together. At Oregon Food Bank, our years of experience responding to disasters across the state has taught us that availability of food during an emergency is just one piece of the resilience puzzle. For example, we can deliver food to a local community, but that alone does not guarantee the community knows food is available and how to access it. Coordination between community groups and local governments is critical for

Oregon Food Bank
Headquarters /
Metro Services
7900 NE 33rd Drive
Portland, OR 97211
503-282-0555

Oregon Food Bank
Washington County
Services
1870 NW 173rd Ave
Beaverton, OR 97006
503-439-6510

Oregon Food Bank
Tillamook County
Services
PO Box 1344
Tillamook, OR 97141
503-842-3154

Oregon Food Bank
Southeast Oregon
Services
773 S Oregon Street
Ontario, OR 97914
541-889-9206

Columbia Gorge
Food Bank
3610 Crates Way
The Dalles, OR 97058
541-370-2333



disaster preparation because it allows them to mitigate each other's gaps when responding to a disaster and its impact on everyday life. Coordination not only creates partnerships that allow them to learn from each other's experiences, but also promotes foundational knowledge for future generations to build upon.

Coordination improves the cost-effectiveness of current funds, which in turn may prevent the use of emergency funds. Establishing trusted lines of communication gives us a clearer picture of how current funds are used, and provides opportunities to leverage existing resources. We also save public money when we are prepared for disasters rather than just reacting to them. A report by the Federal Emergency Management Agency states that [natural hazard mitigation saves \\$6 on average for every \\$1 spent on mitigation grants](#).

We support HB 3170 because it strengthens partnerships between community groups and local government when preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters.

Each local community has unique circumstances and needs, and therefore need to be able to design their own right-sized plans.

We support HB 3170 because it allows for right-sized resilience plans that correspond to the specific circumstances at hand. **Each local community is unique in the type of disasters it faces, its geographical location, what it needs, what it currently has, and who it is made up of.** Therefore, it is critical that communities design resilience hubs and networks that work for them, not a one-size-fits-all approach. HB 3170 empowers local communities and allows us to draw from their lived experiences through disasters.

Knowing that extreme weather and climate events will only increase in frequency and severity, we have a responsibility to act now and protect communities. We urge you to vote YES for HB 3170 and strengthen the connections necessary to make it easier for Oregonians the next time disaster strikes. Stronger communities can make the difference between surviving and thriving.

