

Submitter: Jennifer Constantine  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Climate, Energy, and Environment  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3018

Dear Representative Neron, and Senators Sollman and Patterson,

I am writing to voice my support of HB 3018, which would, among other things, require standardized food labeling and mandated diversion of food waste for a limited number of commercial food production entities. I believe this is an important first step in mitigating the climate risk associated with food waste. Roughly one-third of all food produced in the world is thrown out--to the tune of 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions. According to the Congressional Research Service, that number for the United States is a staggering 30-40% of all food produced is wasted.

While this bill will not prevent food from going uneaten, it will take important steps to make sure that it does not end up in a landfill, where it would continue contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. According to ReFED, a non-profit that works to find solutions for food waste, reducing food waste has more "emissions reduction potential than tropical forest restoration, electric vehicles, public transit, and recycling combined." The time is now to begin to solve this problem.

Regarding labeling, the Food Marketing Institute notes more than 10 different date label explanatory phrases are used on food products. These include sell by, use by, best by, fresh until, use or freeze by, enjoy before, and expires on, among others. These labels often have nothing to do with food safety, but consumers cannot be expected to differentiate between what is important and what can safely be ignored. Uniform labeling is a must to prevent unnecessary waste which, besides polluting, impacts consumers' bank accounts.

I lived in Kern County, California, when they piloted and then adopted a unique approach to diverting food from the landfill, which involved picking up food that was still edible from schools and restaurants, and delivering it to organizations that served it to folks in need. Although that is not the direction of HB 3018, I mention it because it was a wildly successful and popular program, still in existence today, illustrating that the political will to address this problem exists. People are ready and enthusiastic to do what is needed, and this bill is a start to making a difference.

Please pass HB 3018.