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March 12, 2025

**Re: Senate Bill 5526 - Support for Critical Community Food Assistance**

I am submitting testimony in support for increasing funding through the Oregon Hunger Response Fund. I am an attorney in Portland and member of the Oregon Hunger Task Force, board member of Portland: Neighbors Welcome, and community member of Welcome Home Coalition. For two years I was also the Executive Director of Sisters of the Road, most famously known for its non-profit cafe located in Old Town, Portland.

Food insecurity is real. This funding is crucial in delivering essential food assistance to people in Oregon. As prices raise for daily expenses like rent, electricity, and groceries, more and more of us are feeling squeezed. Compound that with our current situation, food assistance is crucial for the well-being of people.

Sisters of the Road through its Fresh Change program, arranged trips to the local farmers market for folks in our community who are low income. They learned about the Double Up Bucks Program. The Double Up Food Bucks Program (DUFEB) provides financial incentives to Oregonians receiving food support benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and allows access to buying fresh food. Just because someone is facing financial hardship does not mean they should only be faced with buying processed foods or lower quality food.

Better food can mean better health. Better health can lead to lower healthcare bills, stability, workforce development, and raising healthier families.

For farmers this also boosts their customer base and supports their well-being as well.

This is an investment and a good one.

Kat Mahoney