

Submitter: Nikotris Lewis

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB611

New Seasons Market is in support of Senate Bill 611, Food for All Oregonians, because we believe food assistance should be available to all Oregon residents. We support the program's commitment to leveraging resources of food equity but also providing community navigation and improved language access, as well as services to help connect families to essential food resources.

Hunger is a continued crisis in our communities, increasing dramatically since the health and economic impacts of COVID-19 which fell hardest on those with the least amount of resources.

Immigrants, refugees and Compact of Free Association (COFA) community members, in particular, have long faced higher rates of hunger and poverty in Oregon. While also being valued and integral members of our communities.

Just one example:

Latine and Pacific Islander residents experienced hunger at twice the rate of white residents

pre-pandemic — and this gap has only widened as our communities continue to struggle with ongoing cost of living rise.

Food for All Oregonians will create a program that eliminates exclusions to SNAP and make applying for assistance equitable and inclusive. The passing of the SB611 means families will be provided with money for groceries; ensuring everyone has the support necessary to navigate community outreach efforts and resources. This is also necessary for us to implement a community driven navigator model increasing trust and safety for Oregon residents.

We know that access to food means better quality of life. Youth do better in school, our families'

health and well-being improves, and our economy thrives through the support of local businesses. This is true in every corner of Oregon—in rural, urban, and suburban communities alike. When all of our neighbors are getting the food that they need, all of Oregon thrives.

This is why we are urging your yes vote on SB 611.