

Submitter: Darr Durham
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Capital Construction
Measure, Appointment or SB5701
Topic:

To: The Ways and Means Subcommittee on Capital Construction

I am writing in SUPPORT of Sen. Suzanne Weber's request for funds for site improvements to build a new distribution facility for North County Food Bank. The food bank is a critical part of the safety net for Tillamook County neighbors who face food insecurity. Our local food bank has been a consistent distribution space for 33 years. Their continued presence is important to our community.

The food bank was required to move from the decommissioned hospital that it had operated in since its beginning. It is difficult to find facilities here on the coast that can meet the food bank's requirements and be out of the tsunami zone, so they have purchased land to build a modest distribution facility. They have completed major steps to get the project started and it is shovel ready.

It's hard to overstate how integrated North County Food Bank is with the community. Some volunteer to distribute food or unload trucks; others work at the Alder Creek Farm community garden to provide fresh produce. Still more participate in local food drives, donate money, and sponsor or attend events that support the food bank. Neighbors helping neighbors in the best Oregon pioneer tradition. My mother-in-law, Barbara Buel, ran the Tillamook Food Bank in its early years. I worked at an organization in Portland which operated a food pantry in NW Portland and provided backpacks full of food to supply families of school children when school meals were not available. I have seen this kind of hunger up close.

Your allocation of funds to bring critical infrastructure elements, including water, sewer, and electricity, to the site will provide about 25 percent of the funds necessary for the project. NCFB has secured donations and grants to construct the rest. I believe this is a reasonable investment of state dollars that will provide returns for decades to come for the people of Tillamook County. The site has room for expansion, and the utilities will support future needs.

Please allocate funds for the North County Food Bank New Distribution Facility project.

Thank you.

Darr Durham
Portland, Oregon