

Submitter: Lauri Walker
On Behalf Of: North County Food Bank
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On
Capital Construction
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5701

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 many people in Tillamook County who struggle with affording adequate food for themselves and their families. Our local food bank has been there for them for 33 years, and it is important that it be able to continue.

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 going and it is shovel ready.

It's hard to overstate how integrated North County Food Bank is with our community. Many of us volunteer to hand out food or unload trucks; others work at the Alder Creek Farm community garden to provide fresh produce. Still more of us participate in local food drives, donate money, and sponsor or attend events that support the food bank. We are neighbors helping our neighbors in the best Oregon pioneer tradition.

Your appropriation 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 to the North County Food Bank New Distribution Facility project.

Thank you.