



## Food Lifeline Position Statement

**Encouraging Food Donation**—ACTIVELY SUPPORT policies and investments to encourage and support food donation practices in Washington and to achieve the state’s goal of a 50% reduction in wasted food by 2030, including creating a \$25 million program to scale up sourcing donated Washington produce, protein, and grains; establishing date labeling standardization to clarify “quality” and “safety;” creating wasted food reduction capacity grants for cold storage and refrigerated trucks, and fostering statewide collaboration on grocery rescue best practices.

**Our state produces enough food to feed everyone, but each year wastes millions of pounds of perfectly good food while nearly 2 million people face hunger. At the same time, wasted food is responsible for 58% of landfill methane emissions released to the atmosphere – a pollutant 80 times more powerful at warming the globe than carbon dioxide.**

With legislation in 2019 and 2022, Washington state established food and climate goals to reduce wasted edible food; match and support the capacity for otherwise wasted edible food with food banks and other distributors to those who need it; and support other productive uses, such as animal feed, energy production, commercial uses, and compost.

Building on these efforts is the next step toward more sustainable, resilient, and equitable food systems in Washington state and for equipping food pantries and food banks to meet their communities’ needs.



Among Washington households with children, 17.3% are currently food insecure, up nearly 5 percentage points from the previous year.

## The Importance and Impact

- Washington growers and producers produce food in abundance and have incredible amounts that end up unsold. Washington grocers, retailers, and food service establishments also have food that won’t end up in a shopping cart or on a table. Much is captured by donation and diverted to food banks, but great amounts are still lost, including to landfills.
- Our state has the potential to divert more than 60 million more pounds of Washington agricultural commodities and Washington is poised to put in place best practices, like date labeling standards, that will help everyone reduce food loss and achieve systems that encourage using food well.
- With investment, support, and encouragement, Washington can nearly double the donated surplus food available for hunger relief efforts statewide – food that may otherwise be lost – at a time when it is needed most. It is estimated that an additional 52.5 million pounds of produce and up to 10 million pounds of highly desired items like meat, seafood, eggs, and dairy products are available to be distributed throughout the state’s existing food banking networks.