



Conservation  
Law Foundation

For a thriving New England

CLF Rhode Island 235 Promenade Street  
Suite 560, Mailbox 28  
Providence, RI 02908  
P: 401.351.1102  
F: 401.351.1130  
www.clf.org

Via Electronic Mail

March 10, 2024

The Honorable Marvin Abney  
Chair, House Finance Committee  
Room 35, State House  
Providence, RI 02903

Re: CLF **Supports** House Bill No. 7995 – Tax Credit for Food Donation

Dear Chair Abney:

The Conservation Law Foundation (“CLF”) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 7995 – Tax Credit for Food. We offer our enthusiastic support for this bill.

CLF is a member-supported nonprofit organization working to conserve natural resources, protect public health, and build healthy communities in Rhode Island and throughout New England. Through its Zero Waste Project, CLF aims to improve food donation and protect communities and our environment from harmful greenhouse gas emissions when food is wasted and disposed of as trash.

House Bill No. 7995 would create a tax credit for qualified taxpayers that donate food to Rhode Island organizations, such as the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, who serve people that face food insecurity. Importantly, this helps make surplus food donation a common practice.

In Rhode Island, 38 percent of households with children say they are experiencing food insecurity. Meanwhile, businesses send approximately 55,000 tons of edible food to the state’s landfill each year.<sup>1</sup> Through its statewide network of 143 member agencies, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank served on average 77,500 people each month in 2023 (January through September), 30% more than one year ago and 49% more than before the pandemic.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, local farms, food service companies, manufacturing, and other retail businesses send approximately 55,000 tons of edible food to Rhode Island’s central landfill, which is nearing capacity. This results in greenhouse gas emissions that exceed approximately 330.8 million pounds per year.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *R.I. food industry leaders call for new tax credit for donating unused food*, The Boston Globe, January 10, 2024; <https://www.bostonglobe.com/2024/01/10/metro/rhode-island-tax-credit-unused-food-hunger-insecurity-waste/>

<sup>2</sup> See 2023 Status Report on Hunger in Rhode Island, The Rhode Island Community Food Bank; [https://rifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023-RICFB-StatusReport-FINAL-digital.pdf?et rid=1934715119&s\\_campaign=rhodemap:newsletter](https://rifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023-RICFB-StatusReport-FINAL-digital.pdf?et rid=1934715119&s_campaign=rhodemap:newsletter)

<sup>3</sup> See Boston Globe, *supra* note 1



Businesses lose money from food that goes to waste. Rhode Island businesses need more incentives to divert food they can't serve or sell and large numbers of Rhode Island citizens facing food insecurity need this food. Excess food donation is an easy and effective solution towards eliminating food loss, supporting businesses, promoting sustainability, and achieving 100% food insecurity in Rhode Island. We therefore urge you to pass House Bill No. 7995.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Stang", written in a cursive style.

Richard Stang  
Senior Attorney  
Conservation Law Foundation

cc: Members of the House Environment & Natural Resources Committee  
Representative Carol Hagan McEntee  
Representative Kathleen A. Fogarty  
Representative Tina L. McGaw  
Representative Jason Knight  
Representative Arthur Handy  
Representative Julie A. Casimiro  
Representative Tina L. Spears  
Darrèll Brown, Vice President, Rhode Island, Conservation Law Foundation