



April 9th, 2025

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I'm writing on behalf of the Rhode Island Food Policy Council and our members regarding HB5404: Tax Credit for Food Donation. We strongly support this bill and our members have chosen it as one of our top priorities this year in addressing the food system.

When it comes to addressing what happens to our surplus food and encouraging those who are able to donate food to do so there are few more effective or environmentally sustainable alternatives than implementing this bill. The [EPA](#) and [Institute for Local Self Reliance](#) have identified food donation as one of the most preferred methods for addressing wasted food. As the landfill moves closer to closing and the Act on Climate's mandates draw closer, this body must take action to address the 3rd largest source of methane emissions in the US - food waste in landfills.

Passing this bill will also help us address food and nutrition security in our state. The RI Life Index measured 38% of the state facing food insecurity. Over a third of the state. Frankly this is unacceptable. And with the cuts coming at the federal level from the current administration to food programs it may only get worse. Saving and donating perfectly good food is a cost effective way to put a dent into this issue.

The Council would also be remiss if we didn't tell you about the great work of many of our members to try to address this issue. Organizations like Rescuing Leftover Cuisine and Foodrecovery.org have created software platforms to connect those with excess food and those who are in need and can accept it. We're talking about places like the West End Food Center in Vice Chair Slater's district or Blackstone Valley Emergency Food Center in rep Alzate's district and countless organizations that are in or are serving your constituents are getting connected with additional nutritious food and providing it to our communities.

Other members like CET provide technical assistance to businesses to help them understand how they can put in place systems to make the donations easy. So there are



fantastic organizations ready and able to make this all work and now they need your help to make it happen.

This bill will give those organizations another tool in the toolbelt to work with businesses. It will give the businesses an incentive to start donating food and when they see that it can be done with minimal effort we know they're going to get on board.

These rescue and diversion organizations also need consistent funding as the Rep Cortvriend's Compost Fund bill H5195 will provide. So we hope you will hear that bill expeditiously as well, but together these bills will go a long way to getting good food out of the landfill, extending the landfills life, feeding hungry people and making RI a better place to live.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Isaac Bearg".

Isaac Bearg
Program Director - Food, Climate & Environment