

Via Electronic Mail

April 8, 2025

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

Re: CLF **Supports** House Bill No. 5404 – Tax Credit for Food Donation

Dear Chair Abney:

The Conservation Law Foundation (“CLF”) appreciates the opportunity to comment on House Bill No. 5404. 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 Communities and Toxics team, 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.

The purpose of House Bill No. 5404 is to 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, while helping to 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

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<sup>1</sup> *R.I. food industry leaders call for new tax credit for donating unused food* (Jan. 10, 2024), The Boston Globe, <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).

capacity, according to Allison Montagnon, a spokeswoman for the Food Policy Council. This results in greenhouse gas emissions that exceed approximately 330.8 million pounds per year.<sup>3</sup>

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. 5404.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard Stang  
Senior Attorney, Rhode Island  
Conservation Law Foundation

cc: Members of the House Environment & Natural Resources Committee  
Representative Carol Hagan McEntee  
Representative Kathleen A. Fogarty  
Representative Tina L. Spears  
Representative David Morales  
Representative Justine Caldwell  
Representative Robert E. Craven Sr.  
Representative Julie A. Casimiro  
Darrèl Brown, Vice President, Rhode Island, Conservation Law Foundation

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