



December 16, 2015

On Dec 10th, 2015, US House Representative Chellie Pingree introduced House Bill 4184, the Food Recovery Act. We are writing on behalf of a coalition of food rescuers and food waste reduction activists in Colorado who firmly support this proposal.

As you may know, at all scales and positions in the food system, there is product loss due to a number of factors. Food can go unharvested on farms due to surpluses or perceived imperfections of the product. Food can be discarded during transport, if it arrives late or the buyers' needs change. It will be discarded from store shelves if it goes unsold. At restaurants and caterers there are losses during preparation and service. In our homes food losses occur due to over-purchasing, lack of planning, and confusion over food dating systems. Taken in the aggregate, estimates put the range of **national losses between 30% and 50% of all food produced**. Largely, this food finds its way into the landfill or compost collection, resulting in a tremendous loss of not only the food, but also the resources that went into producing and transporting that food. Approximately **25% of the water used in the United States and 300 million barrels of oil a year** go to growing food that will ultimately be wasted.

Meanwhile, statewide research has found that approximately **1 in 5 Colorado children do not know where their next meal is coming from**. Innovative organizations have noticed that there is a paradox here, and a potential solution. Momentum has been growing to recover surplus food from the traditional commercial food system and provide it to food-insecure individuals. In Boulder, national organizations such as Feeding America and their affiliates, local non-profit organizations such as the Emergency Family Assistance Association and Boulder Food Rescue, and entrepreneurs such as Tennessee-based Food Donation Connection, work together to collect and redistribute surplus food from retailers to those in need in the local community. In 2014, in the city of Boulder alone, those organizations collectively recovered **1.3 million pounds of good food** that would have otherwise gone to the landfill. Boulder's situation is not unique---in all 50 states, organizations are working together to recover wasted food. These organizations need support from policymakers to maintain incentive structures that encourage businesses and farms to donate rather than discard food.

The Food Recovery Act will support these organizations in what they do, while working to create broader, systemic changes to reduce wasted food.

We strongly support these strategies outlined in the bill:

- Residential wasted food: Improved food date labeling and funding for consumer education
- Agricultural waste: Investment in modernizing and enhancing storage systems and funding work to quantify and better understand farm losses



- Commercial-sector waste: Permanent tax incentives for retailers and restaurants donating food, and increased protection from liability by strengthening the Good Samaritan Food Donation Act

There is momentum growing nationally to address the food waste problem. Earlier this year, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) joined forces in the US Food Waste Challenge to raise awareness of the environmental, health and nutrition issues created by food waste. Together, the USDA and EPA have set national goals for a 50% reduction in wasted food by 2030. The Food Waste Recovery Act would enable these sorts of ambitious changes by making real commitments to reducing wasted food in government agencies, protecting important legal and tax structures that enable food recovery, and providing funding to support needed outreach and education. We believe the Food Recovery Act provides necessary support for organizations working in this space and cultivates real change to address problems otherwise marginalized in our food system.

Signed,

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