



March 16, 2021

MN House of Representatives
Capital Investment Committee

Dear Capital Investment Committee Members:

Second Harvest Heartland recommends the inclusion of H.F. 1753, a bill to support food relief infrastructure needs, in any state finance proposal this legislative session. The groups funded by this proposal—Keystone Community Services, Southern Anoka Community Assistance Food Shelf and Thrift Store, 360 Communities, Community Pathways of Steele County, and Wright County Community Action—are all vital partners in our mission to end hunger in Minnesota. By fully funding their \$7.385 million request for fiscal year 2022, this bill will ensure key food assistance access points remain available and functional.

Second Harvest Heartland is one of the largest, most efficient and innovative hunger relief organizations in the nation. In close partnership with a network of 360 food shelves and nearly 1,000 partner programs, Second Harvest Heartland supports the one in nine people in Minnesota and western Wisconsin facing hunger.

On average, 84 percent of the food distributed by partners comes from Second Harvest Heartland, and in fiscal year 2020, we provided 105 million meals throughout our region. We will continue to leverage our unique position in the emergency food chain to advocate, educate and provide food until everyone in our service area has what they need to thrive. The aforementioned groups are all valued community partners in our work to provide a safety net for the growing number of people in facing hunger.

We anticipate that hunger will remain at increased levels given the projected slow economic recovery from COVID-19. The emergency food system must be operating at full capacity in order to meet the sustained need for food assistance in months and years to come, and this bill does just that. Supporting the infrastructure needs of Keystone Community Services, Southern Anoka Community Assistance Food Shelf and Thrift Store, 360 Communities, Community Pathways of Steele County, and Wright County Community Action will ensure we can continue to lift up our communities to meet their basic needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allison O'Toole".

Allison O'Toole
Chief Executive Officer
Second Harvest Heartland



April 5, 2021

Dear Chair Lee and Committee members,

On behalf of Hunger Solutions Minnesota, we are writing in support of HF 1753. Hunger has reached unprecedented levels, including approximately 1 in 5 Minnesotans experiencing food insecurity and nearly double that rate for communities of color. In tough times, Minnesotans take pride in taking care of one another.

In 2020, food shelves across Minnesota served a record level of over 3.8 million visits. History tells us that those hit hardest by the current economic downturn will be the last to recover, and we must continue to rise to the occasion and leverage the resources necessary to help families struggling to make ends meet.

Hunger Solutions Minnesota is in full support of the coalition of food shelves one-time funding request for infrastructure needs. This funding will help expand capacity to reach the increased number of low-income Minnesotans turning to them for food support, fund innovative ways to get food to people in need, and increase the amount of goods that they can distribute to the broader community.

During a time of increased need we urge your support of HF 1753.

Sincerely,

Colleen Moriarty, Director, Hunger Solutions Minnesota



April 2, 2021

MN House of Representatives
Capital Investment Committee

Dear Capital Investment Committee Members:

Channel One Regional Food Bank recommends the inclusion of H.F. 1753, a bill to support food relief infrastructure needs, in any state finance proposal this legislative session. The groups funded by this proposal-Keystone Community Services, Southern Anoka Community Assistance Food Shelf and Thrift Store, 360 Communities, Community Pathways of Steele County, and Wright County Community Action-are all vital partners in our mission to end hunger in Minnesota. By fully funding their \$7.385 million request for fiscal year 2022, this bill will ensure key food assistance access points remain available and functional.

Channel One Regional Food Bank is the largest hunger relief organization in southeastern Minnesota. With 200 partner agencies across 14 counties, Channel One supports the one in nine people in Minnesota and western Wisconsin facing hunger.

In 2020, Channel One provided over 7.6 million meals throughout its region. We will continue to leverage our unique position in the emergency food chain to advocate, educate and provide food until everyone in our service area has what they need to thrive. The aforementioned groups are all valued community partners in our work to provide a safety net for the growing number of people in facing hunger.

We anticipate that hunger will remain at increased levels given the projected slow economic recovery from COVID-19. The emergency food system must be operating at full capacity in order to meet the sustained need for food assistance in months and years to come, and this bill does just that. Supporting the infrastructure needs of Keystone Community Services, Southern Anoka Community Assistance Food Shelf and Thrift Store, 360 Communities, Community Pathways of Steele County, and Wright County Community Action will ensure we can continue to lift up our communities to meet their basic needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Virginia W. Merritt'.

Virginia Merritt
Executive Director, Channel One Regional Food Bank