



FOOD BANK COUNCIL
OF MICHIGAN

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Agriculture and Rural Development
Subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Appropriations
Rep. Nancy Jenkins, Chair

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Dr. Phil Knight, Executive Director of the Food Bank Council of Michigan (FBCM). In Michigan we have 7 regional food banks that serve 3200 food pantries in all 83 counties. I have read with great interest the objectives proposed in House Bill 5180. I am unclear how these objectives will be accomplished without the help of the Food Bank Council of Michigan and our proven network.

The FBCM is currently piloting two different projects that directly address the objectives of increased food insecurity within identified 'desert' regions of the state of Michigan. The Community Food Club in Grand Rapids and the My Neighborhood Mobile Grocery in Detroit. These two models offer much promise to achieving the objectives of the campaign and reaching the next threshold of food security in Michigan.

One of the reasons hunger is so resistant to our efforts to rid our children of its crippling effects is because of the lack of willingness to collaborate and a succinct coordination of effort. We all have the goal of improving access, particularly access to quality nutritious food. But as we consider utilizing public resources to an existing private loan fund, we must consider how this advances the mission of creating food secure communities. Some of the basic questions that should be considered are:

- How does this ensure access to vulnerable populations?
- What is our expectation for a return on investment?
- Pricing, education and accountability of recipients of the loans are also of a concern.

These are just a few of the critical questions that must be asked as we consider this approach. I look forward to a meaningful discussion with the committee members, the Heart Association and those of us who serve in this pursuit of solving hunger in Michigan full time.

Respectfully,

Dr. Phillip Knight