



January 10, 2024

To the Honorable Daniel J. McKee, Governor of Rhode Island:

It is with pressing concern that we – members of The Rhode Island Food Policy Council, businesses, organizations, and fellow Rhode Islanders signed below – request your consideration that the proposed 2025 budget include a **TAX CREDIT FOR FOOD DONATION**.

We thank you for putting a tax credit into your 2024 proposed budget, even though that item and the related bills (S517 and H5803) did not pass. Taking this out of the proposed 2025 budget would be a step backward for the state, for small businesses, and for communities experiencing food insecurity.

Now is the time to prioritize making excess food donation a common practice among Rhode Island businesses. Doing so would help strengthen food and nutrition security, advance environmental sustainability, and support local businesses, farms, and institutions.

The State houses well-over 6,000 restaurants, markets, food processors, food distributors, farmers markets, farms, commercial fisheries, schools (K-university), hotels, and hospitals. Most experience surplus food that is fit for consumption, yet they are not donating it. Meanwhile:

- **Food donations address food insecurity.** More than 164,000 RI households with children – 38% of Rhode Islanders – face food insecurity, with even higher rates for Black households and Latino households. Food & nutrition insecurity has been proven to lead to inequities in health, education, and opportunities for advancement. In 2022, more than 64,000 tons of surplus food from farms, foodservice, manufacturing, and retail businesses was discarded, the equivalent of more than 101.2 million meals lost.
- **Food donations advance environmental sustainability.** Food lost to landfills is 16.4% higher in RI than the national average while Climate Central cites Rhode Island as among the fastest-warming states in the country. Meanwhile, the RI Central Landfill is projected to reach capacity by 2040 if we continue at the current rates of waste disposal. In 2022, surplus food from farms, foodservice, manufacturing, and retail businesses contributed


55K tons to the landfill and produced 330.8M pounds of greenhouse gasses emitted (a 4.2% increase from 2015).

- **Food donations benefit small businesses and the economy.** Based on the most recent Rhode Island Solid Waste Characterization Study, we conclude that diverting excess food from landfills can save businesses **as much as \$4,994,680 annually** due to the costs of the tipping fee of \$115 per ton sent to the landfill.

TAX CREDIT FOR FOOD DONATION in the proposed budget would lead to a win-win-win: Donating surplus food is a win for people who need food assistance, a win for the environment and the health of all Rhode Islanders AND a win for businesses that do the right thing.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Nessa Richman, Executive Director
Rhode Island Food Policy Council
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CC: Elizabeth Tanner, Secretary of Commerce
CC: Senator Dominic Ruggiero, Senate President
CC: Representative Joseph Shekarchi, Speaker of the House of Representatives
CC: Senator Ryan Pearson, Senate Majority Leader
CC: Representative Christopher Blazejewski, House Majority Leader
CC: Senator Louis DiPalma, Chair, Senate Finance Committee
CC: Representative Marvin Abney, House Finance Committee
CC: Senator Joshua Miller, Chair, Senate Health and Human Services Committee
CC: Representative Susan Donovan, House Health and Human Services Committee
CC: Senator Alana DiMario, Chair, Senate Environment and Agriculture Committee
CC: Representative David Bennett, Chair, House Environment and Natural Resources Committee

The 563 Undersigned:

Diane Lynch, Rhode Island Food Policy Council
Dana Siles, Rescuing Leftover Cuisine

David Dadekian, Eat Drink RI
Jesse Rye, Farm Fresh Rhode Island
Frederick Mattera, Commercial Fisheries Center of RI
Scott Bromberg, Rhode Island Food Dealers Association
Richard Stang, Conservation Law Foundation
Steven Arthurs, Rhode Island Food Policy Council
Dannie Ritchie, Community Health Innovations of Rhode Island
Nanette Thayer, Rhode Island Indian Council
Karin Wetherill, RI Healthy Schools Coalition
Eric Weiner, PVD Food Truck Events
Rose Forrest, Sodexo
Ellen Slattery, Gracie's
Brittany DeCosta, Knead Doughnuts
Margaret Tryforos, Care New England Medical Group
Michael E Lopes, Providence Lions Club
Dinalyn Spears, Narragansett Indian Tribe
Peter Trafton, MD, Emeritus Professor, Brown University
Heather Zoller, Z pita chipz.
Greg Gerritt, ProsperotyForRI.com
Alison Tovar, Brown University
Hannah Lasorsa, Sail Newport
Jim Murphy, Rhode Island College
Kayla Lanoie, Lincoln Housing Authority
Celeste Jeffrey, Blackstone Valley Advocacy Center
Yanel Severino, African Alliance RI
Olivia J Martinez, West End Community Center
Michelle Girasole, Kingston Congregational Church
Luis Cardona, Providence Rescue Mission
Doug, Johnson & Wales University
Tarshire Battle, Roots 2Empower
Tess Feigenbaum, Epic Renewal
Armine Donabedian, THE COMMUNITY BUILDERS/OLMSTED GARDENS/Presidential Place
Andrea Collins, Natural Resources Defense Council
Taina Lee, Community Action Partnership of Providence County
V Raffini, Southside Community Land Trust
Alice Howard, Sunrise Forever, Inc.
Charlene F. Traynum, Boys and Girls Clubs Of Newport County
Sherry DiBiase, Rhode Island College/Food 4 Thought Pantry
Rachel Averitt, Rely On Rach
Kate Masury, Eating with the Ecosystem
Thea Upham, Farm Fresh Rhode Island
Amanda Repose, Fully Rooted

Joel Bishop, Gnarly vines farm
Lynne Githens, Barrington TapIn
Martha Simmons, Looking Upwards
Diana Kushner, Arcadian Fields Organic Farm
Stephen Souls, North Kingstown Food Pantry
Karen Lynch, Your Neighborhood Food Pantry
Jeanne Michon, New Beginnings Inc
Kristen Shields, TAPIN
Jeff Sullivan, Jeff's HOPE Fund
Sarah Shaw, Jonnycake Center of Westerly
Mia Fishkin, Registered Dietitian, RI Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Timothy Killilea, Rhode Island Sustainable Adventures
Susan Trencansky, Curriculum Fix, LLC
Kathleen Egersheim, We Heart Lives
Michael A, Rice, University of Rhode Island
Berl Jonathan Mendel, Jon Mendel Sound
Mark Garofalo, Fire Works Catering
Jody Lisberger, The University of Rhode Island
Jennifer Emerson, Barrington United Methodist Church/ Tapin
Julia Taylor, Golden Root Gardening Inc
Paul Kubiski, Bootblack Brand
Mary-Kate Kane, Aquidneck Community Table
Sally Hanchett, Channing Memorial Church
Garrett Lockhart, The Margot Group, LLC
Taylor Erkkinen, The Brooklyn Kitchen
James Corwin, RI School Recycling Project
Ann Pierce, St Johns Food Bank
Erin Dube, Pawtucket School Committee
Heidi Carla, Cranston Public Schools
Laura Elderkin, Looking Upwards
Kate Venturini Hardesty, University of Rhode Island
Teddi Jallow, Refugee Dream Center
Mary Anne Crittenden, St John's Lodge Food Bank
Claire Bowen, Small World Farm, LLC
Kristin Jahne, La Belle Peche coffee roasters
Andrally Horn, Open Farms Retreat
Stefani Weber, Coventry Community Food Bank
Maureen Maloney, Sacred Cow Granola
Annajane Yolken, Project Weber/RENEW
Kathryn, President, Providence Lions Club
Emlyn Addison, Cookies and Robots
Mark Federico Jr, Narragansett Creamery

Patricia Cawley, North Kingstown Schools
Adrienne Marchetti, PAWTUCKET SOUP KITCHEN
Scott McGee, Gator's Pub
Jeannine Casselman, MLPB
Sam Burgess, Forge To Table Inc
Shira Hirshberg, All Foods Nutrition
Rosa Dalomba, Pop Porium of RI
Maria Rivera Saillant, West Warwick Public Library
Carla Doughty, Zero Waste Providence
Nwando Egbuche Ofokansi, The WATCH Coalition
Marilyn Mathison, Hope & Main
Harry Rosenblum, Eating with the Ecosystem
Patrick Baur, University of Rhode Island
Melissa Pena, West End Community Center
Sam Shepherd, Southside Community Land Trust
Sienna Viette, Open Farms Retreat
Shana Santow, Southside Community Land Trust
Tammy Kim, Southside Community Land Trust
Eden Casteel, Kingston Congregational Church, Kingston RI
Kakeena Castro, Southside Community Land Trust
B. Baba, Epic Renewal
Amelia Lopez, Southside Community Land Trust
Steve Maciel, 1 of 52 Hunger Network
Kymara Mary Owusu, CAPP Food Pantry
Warren Heyman, RI School Recycling Project
Ester Bishop, Gnarly vines farm
Nikki Ayres, Farm Fresh RI
Lily Harding, Farm Fresh RI
Thomas Niemeyer, Hope's Harvest
Alexander Brown, Brown University
Gemma Gorham, Rhode Island Food Policy Council
Annie Munro, UMass Dartmouth
Lauren Armstrong, Hope Harvest
Linda Vaughan-Dubois, Hope's Harvest
Charles Bucciantini, Johnson & Wales University
Philip Fong, URI Master Gardener
Tirza Rivera-Cira, Barrington Tap-In, Inc (Touch a Person in Need)
Shannon Hickey, Farm Fresh RI
Griffin Kinch, Brown University
Erica Woods, I AM EMPRESS/Stone River House
Christine Sieczkiewicz, Jonnycake Center of Westerly Giving Garden volunteer
FRN @ Brown Brown University

David Veloso, Brown University
Beth Herman, URI Master Gardener
Frances Brunault, Jonnycake
Jan Fedyszyn, Brown University
Laurie Ward, Tap In (food pantry serving East Providence, Bristol, Warren, Barrington)
Jamie Taylor, Jonnycake Center of Westerly
Cindy Baker, Hope's Harvest
Neha Narayan, Brown University
Dawn Cardace, University of Rhode Island
Florence, Tap-In
Elizabeth Clark, Tap-In food pantry
Patricia E Lang, East Bay Food Pantry
Marie Carreiro, Tap-In
HOWARD BOKSENBAUM, TAPIN
Joyce Rongo, TapIn
Judith George, Westerly Food Pantry Volunteer
Cindy Shetlet, JonnyCake of Westerly
Jean Giorgio, TapIn
Jerry Hmm, TAPIN
Kathy Humm, TapIn
Claire Thayet, Jonnycake of Westerly
M. Dawn King, Brown University
Elizabeth C Champlin, TAPIN
Shari Friedman, Tap-in Food Pantry, Barrington
Trish Sylvester, Tapin
Judie Sky, Meadowbrook Waldorf School
Caroline Bray, Hopes Harvest
Kelly Nevins, Women's Fund of Rhode Island
Anne Gass, TAPIN
Nikki Lee, Dandy Lion Farm
Maureen Pearlman, Farm Fresh RI
Phoebe Hong, Brown University
Nancy Reiter, Farm Fresh RI
Holly Darby, Farm Fresh Rhode Island
Kunzang Namgyal, Brown University
Nell Paye, Askiya
Susan Holmes, TAPIN
Don Miller, Tapin
Alison Kutcher, URI
Karen Orabona, URI
Linda Bainer, TAP-IN
Addy Kerwin, Brown U

Chloe de Campos, Brown University
Lillian Lau, Farm Fresh RI
Karen Naff, URI Food Recovery Program
Lisa Kennedy, Tri-County Community Action Agency
Jo Rodehorst, TapIn inc.
Emma Weech, Brown University
David Goldstein, TMD Group
Anne Cohen
Diane Madsen, Hopes Harvest
Lynne Turnbull
Christine Stamm, Johnson & Wales University
Catherine Gutowski, Brown University
Sarah Denby, TAP-IN
Alex Larson, PACE-Rhode Island
Sammie Paul, MEANS Database
Shonan Jackson, Farm Fresh RI
Bevan Linsley, Aquidneck Community Table
William Michael McNamara
Rita Garland, St. John's Lodge Food Bank
Rita Logan, St John Food pantry.
Zoe Ritter, Barrington High School
Donna E. Matthews, St. John's Lodge Food Bank, Inc.
Genevieve Primeau, Farm Fresh RI
Kate Lacouture, Green Circle Design
Mary Studlick, Hopes Harvest
Ally Jennings, Farm Fresh RI
Rosemary Galiani, R. Gal's Workroom LLC
Dani Paradiso, WSU
Kiffen Ratkevich, Farm Fresh RI
Ellen Asermely, Southside Community land Trust
Jennifer Krueger, Jonnycake Center for Hope
Nikki Vazquez, Aquidneck Community Table
Denise Greene, West End Community Center
Sophia, The Farmlink Project
Camille Aquino, Brown University
Eric Siles, Mediamax Network
Jack Diaz, Rescuing Leftover Cuisine
Lauren D. Armstrong, Esq., Rescuing Leftover Cuisine
Meghan Hobbs, Rescuing Leftover Cuisine
Franca Hobbs, Rescuing Leftover Cuisine
Phil Chisholm, Rescuing Leftover Cuisine
Allison Montagnon, Rhode Island Food Policy Council / Red Tomato

Nancy Moloney, Food Recovery for Rhode Island
Kim Walsh, URI FOOD RECOVERY/Rescuing Leftover Cuisine
Jennifer Keiser Voas, Rescuing Leftover Cuisine and Franklin Farm volunteer
Fanny Haidemenos, Rescuing Leftover Cuisine
Laura Lopata, URI Master Gardener
Peter Letendre, The Lighthouse Shop, Riverside Congregational Church
Heather Latino, Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic
Lina Roman, CHWARI
Lorenzo Macaluso, Center for EcoTechnology
Johanna Corcoran, We Share Hope
Josephine St John
Aoife Bird
Jillian Torgan
Gail F Rao
Jenn Brady
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Caitlin Mandel
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