



March 6, 2025

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Good morning, Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee,

My name is Terence Miller, and I am the Advocacy Director at Preble Street. Preble Street's mission is to empower people experiencing problems with homelessness, housing, hunger, and poverty and advocate for solutions to these issues. I would be remiss not to thank this Committee and Senator Talbot Ross for your support last session for the capital funding of Preble Street's Food Security Hub. This expansion is excitingly being built and will be completed in October 2025. Thank you.

We strongly support LD 415 because this \$1M in additional funding to the Statewide Hunger Relief Program administered by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry supports Preble Street's Food Security Hub (FSH) in its daily fight against food insecurity. Our FSH, through Good Shepard Food Bank and Mainers Feeding Mainers, serves over 10,000 people of all ages, genders, races, and ethnicities each year through its food pantry and kitchen —families, youth, adults, elders, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, Veterans, and survivors of human trafficking. Preble Street produces up to 2,000 meals daily, which are delivered to area shelters, partner organizations, and locations where unhoused people spend time. Preble Street is committed to fighting food insecurity by committing to the state's Ending Hunger by 2030 campaign, a multiple-stakeholder collaborative commitment to strategic priority areas for aligned action.



According to Feeding America, COVID-19 has unprecedentedly impacted food insecurity. Estimates project that the pandemic has caused hunger in Maine to rise by 25% and has disproportionately affected Mainers of color. Strikingly, 40% of Black families in Maine are considered food insecure, and 28% of people of color experience food insecurity. The Food Security Hub received 128,155 pounds of fresh produce from 20 dedicated Maine farmer partners to meet this tremendous need. We redistributed this produce through our Food Pantry and prepared meal programs, ensuring that nutritious local farm produce is integrated into our emergency food assistance programs.

We urge the committee to support LD 415, a critical investment in Maine's fight against hunger and food insecurity. By providing an additional \$1 million

50 years of turning hunger and homelessness into opportunity and hope

in funding, this bill will empower organizations like Preble Street to continue their essential work, ensuring that every Mainer has access to the food they need to thrive.

Thank you.