



*Senator Eloise Vitelli  
Senate Majority Leader  
3 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0003  
Office (207) 287-1515  
Home (207) 443-4660*

***Testimony of Sen. Eloise Vitelli supporting  
LD 1299, An Act To Permit Emergency Funding for Food Banks When a  
State of Emergency is Declared  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry  
April 22, 2021***

Senator Dill, Representative O’Neil, esteemed members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, my name is Eloise Vitelli, and I represent Senate District 23, which includes all of Sagadahoc County and the Town of Dresden in Lincoln County. I am grateful for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1299, “An Act To Permit Emergency Funding for Food Banks When a State of Emergency is Declared.”

All of us read about, heard from our constituents, or saw firsthand how hunger exploded in our communities over the past year. With people suddenly out of work, kids home from school, and unemployment benefits often delayed, putting food on the table was more challenging than ever for many families.

Luckily, changes in federal guidelines and dedication from school staff meant that Maine students could keep receiving, at the very least, nutritious lunches during the school week. But for individuals and families without this option, or who needed additional support, local food banks were there to help them bridge the gap.

The degree of need our local food banks have had to meet has been astounding. I know you will hear directly from food banks on how the pandemic impacted the populations they serve, their operations, and their bottom lines. As food banks work to support our communities, the government must be there to support them.

By allowing the Governor to distribute additional funding to these organizations during a state of emergency, we can help these food banks as they do their incredible work and take care of our people. This bill presents an easy step we can take to prepare for any future emergencies we may face together. I am grateful to Rep. Paulhus for introducing this bill, and I thank the committee for its consideration.