

April 14, 2026

Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for [H7698](#), the Tax Credit for Food Donation. This legislation would incentivize businesses to donate edible surplus by offering a tax credit equal to 75% of the donated food's market value, up to \$5,000.

The Rhode Island Food Policy Council has championed this legislation since 2023. Since then, it has been refined in collaboration with the Rhode Island Division of Taxation, Rhode Island Commerce, and the Harvard Food Law & Policy Clinic. **After four years of support, it is time to turn common sense into common practice.**

Barriers remain: liability concerns and low awareness of food recovery organizations like Rescuing Leftover Cuisine and FoodRecovery.org, which use technology to make donating edible surplus simple, continue to deter participation. As a result, many businesses default to composting, often unaware that the EPA prioritizes source reduction, donation, upcycling, and animal feed over disposal.

Rhode Island's [wasted ban](#) acts as the "stick." This tax credit is the "carrot" — a critical incentive for businesses to donate edible surplus food. Aligned with the [Rhode Island Climate Strategy](#) and the [Rhode Island 2030 Food Strategy](#), this bill helps businesses make informed, proactive choices that move excess food up the pipeline.

The Food Donation Tax Credit will:

1. Save public and private dollars:

The state's investment yields significant returns — lowering business costs, reducing strain on households, and generating public savings. Nationally, businesses generate [\\$240 billion](#) in surplus food across the food industry. In Rhode Island, nearly half of [foodservice](#) surplus still goes to landfills. The numbers speak for themselves:

- 17,631.7 tons (35,263,400 pounds) of surplus food from industry sectors enters landfills
- 35,263,400 pounds ÷ 1.2 pounds per meal = ~29.4 million meals
- 29,386,167 meals × \$4.04 per meal = ~\$118.7 million in potential food value

Prevent Wasted Food. Provide For People. Protect The Planet.

Redirecting **just 5%** would deliver nearly **\$6 million** in meals for people facing hunger and food insecurity.

Each pound of recovered edible surplus represents approximately \$3.37 in food value (based on \$4.04 per meal and 1.2 pounds per meal). By not investing in this legislation to redirect edible surplus food, the state remains **penny wise and pound foolish – literally**.

2. Alleviate food and nutrition insecurity:

Rhode Island faces a [38%](#) food insecurity rate, compared to a national range of [13.7-16.2%](#) – roughly 135–177% higher.

3. Empower local nonprofits:

Increased edible food recovery strengthens frontline organizations, allowing more resources to go toward staff, services, and programming.

4. Address environmental health risks (2024 metrics):

- Rhode Island sends [44.1%](#) of its food to landfills – about 36.5% higher than the national average of [32.3%](#). Meanwhile, the Central Landfill is projected to reach capacity by [2046](#).
- RI [industry sectors](#) (retail, farm, manufacturing, and foodservice) discarded 17.6K tons of surplus food, roughly the weight of 4,000 elephants.
- [Decomposing food](#) generates methane, a greenhouse gas 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide, contributing to air and water pollution.

Rhode Island has the opportunity to lead the nation in advancing toward near-universal food access and dramatically reduced wasted food. This bill is a strategic investment in public health, economic efficiency, and long-term resilience – and a clear opportunity to act.

Sincerely,



Dana Siles