



September 25, 2020

Timothy Tauscheck
Contracts & Bids Manager, Sysco
22820 54th Avenue South
Kent, WA 98032

Dear Timothy:

I write to formally notify you that Oregon Food Bank will not participate in Phase 3 of the *Farmers-to-Families Food Box Program* (FFFBP). While FFFBP provided a steady supply of produce, protein and dairy in earlier months, there are a host of new requirements and changes included in Phase 3 contracts that render this program unworkable for Oregon Food Bank.

Among the significant challenges is the requirement that each household receive a kit made up of multiple pre-set boxes. We believe in providing healthy, culturally-relevant food to the more than 860,000 community members we serve each year. This prescriptive approach removes any semblance of consumer choice — and places food assistance out of reach for thousands of families without access to a vehicle to transport multiple boxes.

These boxes also must be delivered to food assistance sites together, regardless of a given agency's product needs or capacity. For many of our partners, it would be impossible to receive and store such large quantities of frozen food — not to mention food safety challenges that would result from commingling allergens and varied temperature-regulated foods.

Phase 3 contracts also require that food boxes include a letter from the President of the United States that congressional leaders have described as “inappropriate and a violation of federal law”. Though these concerns focus largely on the federal Hatch Act, there are real questions as to whether food assistance organizations can ethically distribute such a message with an election looming in mere weeks. Regardless, it is not our role to facilitate public relations for the administration.

Adding to these concerns, Secretary Sonny Perdue recently announced that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) will officially end FFFBP on October 31. This places an incredible burden on our partners to make significant adjustments in food storage and distribution models for a program that will end in a few short weeks.

(continued)

**Oregon Food Bank
Headquarters /
Metro Services**
7900 NE 33rd Drive
Portland, OR 97211
503-282-0555

**Oregon Food Bank
Washington County
Services**
1870 NW 173rd Ave
Beaverton, OR 97006
503-439-6510

**Oregon Food Bank
Tillamook County
Services**
PO Box 1344
Tillamook, OR 97141
503-842-3154

**Oregon Food Bank
Southeast Oregon
Services**
773 S Oregon Street
Ontario, OR 97914
541-889-9206

**Columbia Gorge
Food Bank**
3610 Crates Way
The Dalles, OR 97058
541-370-2333



oregonfoodbank.org

Due to this truncated timeline, prohibitive logistical challenges and serious ethical concerns, neither Oregon Food Bank's Statewide Warehouses nor our branches in Beaverton, Tillamook, Ontario and The Dalles will participate in Phase 3 of FFFBP. Each of the 15 regional food banks and individual food assistance sites in Oregon will weigh these same requirements and concerns and decide on their own whether to move forward with the program's final phase. Sharon McFadden and others from our Food Resource Development team can provide contact information for each region.

I can't underscore how much Oregon Food Bank has appreciated Sysco's continued partnership and support for hunger relief initiatives throughout the Pacific Northwest. I understand that these onerous contractual requirements were created by the president's administration and elements of the USDA — not by national or local partners at Sysco. And I know the entire Oregon Food Bank team looks forward to continuing our work together in the months and years ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susannah", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Susannah Morgan
CEO, Oregon Food Bank

cc: Sysco Portland
Bryce White, Oksana Zagaryuk, David Turnbull

