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NEWS RELEASE

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Crop donation credit approved by House

Salem, OR - The House of Representatives unanimously approved a bill that will provide farm fresh produce for hungry Oregon families on Tuesday. Senate Bill 1541 allows farmers to claim a tax credit for a portion of crops donated to food banks. The bill is part of the Senate Republican Legislative Agenda, and now heads to the Governor for his signature.

"I'm proud of the work that was done to bring this bill to the Governor's desk," said Senator Chuck Thomsen (R-Hood River), who drafted and sponsored the bill. "Oregon has some of the most fertile ground and best farmers in the world, and this legislation will help put their product on the table of hungry Oregon families."

Hunger continues to be a problem in Oregon, with an estimated 509,000 Oregonians suffering from food insecurity. More than 800,000 Oregonians depend on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in order to feed their families. Hungry Oregonians turn to food banks for help when their resources and SNAP benefits run out.

Farmers often have crops they would like to donate, but the cost of donation can be expensive. Senate Bill 1541 will allow farmers to donate crops to local food banks and claim 15% of the value of the whole sale price of the crop as a tax credit. This will increase the amount of fresh, nutritious vegetables and fruit available to vulnerable families in need of food assistance.

Thomsen introduced a similar concept last session, but it was still in committee when session adjourned.

Thomsen was first elected to the State Senate in 2010. He is a fourth generation orchardist from Hood River. He graduated from Hood River High School in 1975, and went on to graduate from Willamette University. Thomsen has been a volunteer firefighter with the Pine Grove Fire Department for thirty-three years. Thomsen served as a Hood River County Commissioner for 16 years.

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