

# WASHINGTON FOOD WASTE REDUCTION PLANNING PROCESS

## Food Safety Subject Matter Experts – November Meeting Summary

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### Participants

Emily Hovis – Washington State Department of Health  
Mary Harrington – Washington Department of Ecology  
Jade Monroe – Washington Department of Ecology  
David Smith – Washington State Department of Agriculture  
Travis Dutton – Clark County Public Health Department  
Christina Sherman – Tacoma Pierce County Health Department  
Season Long – Cowlitz County Health & Human Services

### Meeting Summary

#### *Overview of HB114 and food waste reduction goal*

- Department of Ecology website will track progress of plan development and invite public comment
- Department of Commerce consultant will complete a study of our state's food waste management and donation system. A draft report should be available for review in March 2020.

#### *Subject matter expert groups*

- Education and Behavior Change, Hunger Relief, Food Business, Food Collection and Conversion, and Food Safety
- All groups to meet separately every other month through May
- A cross-sector group will also meet every other month (one representative from each expert group and core team members)
- Expert groups will provide insight and input on food waste reduction plan proposal

#### *Food Safety work group focus*

- Recommend a regulatory environment that optimizes activities and processes to rescue food.
- Avoid placing burdensome regulations on the hunger relief system.
- Recommend changes to state law, including changes to food quality, labeling, and inspection requirements under chapter 69.80 RCW and any changes in laws relating to the donation of food waste or wasted food for animals.
- Need to remember to look at things from a whole food system perspective.

#### *Overview of solution strategy template and implementation plan*

- Three types of solutions:
  - Prevention (source reduction), Rescue (feed people), Recovery (feed soil, feed animals, create energy)
- Three phases for implementation:
  - Phase 1 (low cost), Phase 2 (intermediate cost), Phase 3 (high cost / legislative action)
- Funding recommendations

### *Questions/Concerns/Comments from Participants about Food Waste Plan:*

- Ongoing logistical issues with transportation of rescued food.
  - Need to know where hunger relief organizations (HRO) are so we can recommend food rescue within the local community. Potential Solution: HRO mapping with information such as:
    - Who has cold storage? Who doesn't?
    - Who has volunteers to pick up donations? Who doesn't?
  - Need for refrigerated vehicles. Potential Solution: grants for HRO to obtain refrigerated vehicles. Like Thurston County Food Rescue example.
- Do HRO want to be part of the food waste reduction conversation? Yes. We have a HRO SME group that is involving these stakeholders.
- Have we looked at other states plans and lessons learned?
  - Yes, we are actively researching. One challenge is that many states are in a similar planning process and not much data is available for effectiveness of implementation.
  - For example, CA work to train food inspectors on food donation and rescue best practices.
  - We are trying to analyze best practices that already exist, not just in the US but also abroad.
- Need to be mindful of burden, both for the regulated industry and regulators.
  - Limited resources currently exist to provide technical support to HROs on food rescue and donation.
  - Currently, no funding mechanism for inspections at retail HROs

### *Questions/Concerns/Comments from Participants About Potential Standardized Labeling Legislation:*

- Need to be mindful of impacts on interstate trade and commerce.
- Is the bill just for perishable foods? No, this would apply to all foods that have a consumer facing label.
- Enforcement concerns:
  - Enforced by LHJs with civil penalties being levied on the retailer for each violation
  - Can LHJs levy civil penalties or fines? Not really. A fee for service model exists for most LHJs and fees are not punitive.
  - Unreasonable to hold the retailer responsible for something that is done by the food manufacturer.
- One of the most important aspects is consumer education, but is not currently addressed in the proposed legislation.

### **Next Steps:**

- Hoping to have additional information to share about proposed standardized labeling legislation and stakeholder input.
- Need to discuss potential recommendations including:
  - food safety education for consumers, food businesses, HROs and LHJs
  - increasing HRO transportation and refrigeration capacity
  - encouraging value added food processing
  - standardized donation regulation between DOH and WSDA

*Next Meeting: Thursday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, from 10:00am – 12:00pm*