

Diane Fish

In responding to requests for public comment I would like to focus on food donations and recovery efforts as outlined in the priority areas:

Recommend regulations that support safe food donations

Stable funding for food waste reduction efforts and food waste management

Technical support for organizations working in food waste recovery and prevention

Facilitate safe food donations from restaurants and food markets

I work with food banks and farmers to increase food access to nutritionally dense vegetables and fruits - and while there is excess of these items in summer through late fall - outside of the processing and storage capacity in Central WA - limited resources exist in the smaller communities West of the Mountains. Public participation grants - available biennially offer some opportunities for us to pursue infrastructure and funding to process excess produce in season and process recovered food for distribution to food pantry clients - they are not a "stable" funding source. The fact that the last round was released prior to the approval of the 20-21 budget and I missed it still makes me crunchy (and a tiny bit bitter)! If there were smaller grants - of \$3000-5000 available either from the state or as pass through to the counties - on a more frequent basis that would be helpful. A stable funding source rather than reliance on grants and other soft \$\$ would be even more desirable. As the ongoing pandemic demonstrates more gaps in our food system, examining community level responses to food waste and recovery, enacting localized responses and implementation by existing partnerships would make the work we do more impactful.