

News Release
For Immediate Release

Legislation would curb food waste
Comprehensive legislation will prevent hunger, reduce environmental impact
Compiled by Kay Rogers, CEA-FCS

WASHINGTON — U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) and U.S. Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (D-ME) have introduced H.R. 3444, the Food Recovery Act, comprehensive bicameral legislation to reduce food waste in stores and restaurants, schools and institutions, on farms, and in American homes.

Every year in the United States, 40 percent of food produced domestically goes uneaten – meanwhile, domestic food production accounts for 50 percent of United States land use, 80 percent of fresh water consumption and 10 percent of the total energy budget. Food waste in landfills further harms the environment by contributing dramatically to the production of methane and other harmful gases. The Food Recovery Act takes a top to bottom approach to plugging the stream of food waste across all industries and demographics.

“This bill would address inefficiencies that lead to waste across all aspects of the food supply chain – curbing the 62 million tons of food thrown out each year in the United States,” **said Blumenthal**. “Simplifying food date labeling and diverting healthy, wholesome food from landfills won’t just benefit the environment – it will help alleviate food insecurity and save consumers and businesses money. I urge my colleagues to join us and tackle the challenge of food waste with the multifaceted response it demands.”

“Food waste in America is a growing problem, but it is also an opportunity,” **said Pingree**. “We can save money for consumers, create economic opportunity, and feed those in need while keeping perfectly good food out of landfills. I’m proud to introduce the Food Recovery Act with Senator Blumenthal to support and build on efforts already going on in our communities to ensure that more of our food is put to use rather than going to waste.”

H.R. 3444, the Food Recovery Act will:

- **Reduce food waste at the consumer level** through the inclusion of the Food Date Labeling Act to standardize confusing food date labels;
- **Reduce food wasted in schools** by encouraging cafeteria’s to purchase lower-price “ugly” fruits and vegetables, and by extending grant programs that educate students about food waste and recovery;
- **Reduce wasted food throughout the federal government** through the establishment of a Food Recovery Liaison at USDA to coordinate federal efforts, and by requiring companies

that contract with the federal government to donate surplus food to organizations such as food banks and soup kitchens;

- **Reduce wasted food going to landfills** by encouraging composting as a conservation practice eligible for support under USDA's conservation programs; and
- **Reduce wasted food through research** by directing the USDA to develop new technologies to increase the shelf life of fresh food, and by requiring the USDA to establish a standard for how to estimate the amount of wasted food at the farm level.

Senators Ron Wyden (D-OR), Brian Schatz, (D-HI), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), and Cory Booker (D-NJ) are original cosponsors of the Food Recovery Act.

The legislation is supported by the Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic, the American Biogas Council, Recology, Hungry Harvest, National Farmers Union, National Consumers League, Food Policy Action, the National Resources Defense Council, and FoodCorps. It has also been praised by advocates in Maine.

“Congresswoman Pingree’s efforts to help reduce the amount of food we waste are incredibly important for people and our environment. Even as food waste trends upward, so too does the number of Mainers suffering from food insecurity. This legislation will help redirect the 40% of our food supply currently ending up in landfills, to where it belongs—people’s bellies,” **said Sarah Wakeman, Sustainable Maine Project Director at the Natural Resources Council of Maine.**

“An important Maine ethic is ‘Use what you have’. Congresswoman Pingree’s bill aligns with our community-based efforts to make the best use of nutritious food that would otherwise not be eaten,” **said Jim Hanna,**

Executive Director of the Cumberland County Food Security Council.

“Wasting food is bad for the economy, bad for the environment and bad for American families, businesses and farmers,” **said Tom Colicchio, FPA co-founder, chef and good food advocate.** “We are tremendously grateful to Senator Blumenthal and Congresswoman Pingree for introducing the Food Recovery Act today and leading the charge to take on this huge issue of wasted food. This is a truly important bipartisan issue. Reducing food waste today can make a huge positive difference for our food system tomorrow.”

“I’m thrilled to support Representative Pingree and Senator Blumenthal’s Food Recovery Act, a comprehensive response to the 40% of food wasted each year in our country,” **said Emily Broad Leib, Director of the Harvard Law School Food Law and Policy Clinic.** “This effort takes a keen eye towards the food waste problems of today, and anticipates the food recovery solutions of tomorrow. Reducing food waste has triple-bottom line impacts: it creates jobs, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and generates financial gains. In our work, we’ve seen first-hand the systemic barriers standing in the way of reducing food waste, and the introduction of the Food Recovery Act represents a pivotal moment in our effort to solve these challenges.”

“After feeding hungry people and animals and reducing food waste, the next step for any business or home should always be to make sure food scraps get recycled. This bill will address all of those priorities and help create new food recycling infrastructure, such as biogas systems, which will better manage our waste, catalyze new capital investments and generate good paying middle class jobs,” **said Patrick Serfass, Executive Director of the American Biogas Council.**

“I believe that in this country, 20 billion pounds of produce should not go to waste while nearly 49 million Americans are food insecure. This bill helps businesses, non-profits, farmers, and schools come together to use one problem to solve the other. Schools will be encouraged to purchase off-grade produce because of the FRA, which means millions of children will now have more accessibility to eating healthy during the school day. I, as Evan Lutz, and we, as Hungry Harvest, fully support the Food Recovery Act of 2017,” **said Evan Lutz, CEO and Co-Founder of Hungry Harvest.**

“Recology strongly supports the Food Recovery Act, introduced by Rep. Pingree and Sen. Blumenthal. As a waste management company, our mission is to waste zero and create a shift from landfills to recovery. Our employee-owners work every day to develop and discover sustainable resource recovery practices to create a world without waste. The Food Recovery Act, from beginning to end, has the potential to radically reduce the amount of food wasted across the country, furthering goals Recology has long sought,” **said Eric Potashner, Vice President & Senior Director Strategic Affairs at Recology.**

—The Offices of U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
and U.S Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (D-ME)