



Rep. McNerney Seeks to Improve Federal Contract Oversight and Address Food Waste

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Congressman Jerry McNerney

Washington – In an effort to reduce government waste and address food insecurity, Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-09) recently introduced a bill that would help eradicate wasteful practices among government contractors who provide food services to the federal government. **H.R. 4382**, the **Food Waste Accountability Act**, would require some food service contractors to document and report how much of their surplus food is thrown away, composted, or donated. With this bill, Congressman McNerney aims to reduce food waste and

provide more quality, edible food for vulnerable families in need across the nation.

“It is unacceptable that 40 percent of America’s food supply is wasted each year at a time when so many vulnerable communities suffer from food insecurity. The Food Waste Accountability Act will implement greater transparency with our federal food service contractors to determine how much food is being wasted, and help provide food supplies to feed families most in need,” said Rep. McNerney. “Promoting greater accountability of the contractors that handle and distribute the food to our federal government will ensure a reduction in food waste moving forward and help lower the number of American families living with food insecurity.”

The Federal Food Donation Act of 2008 attempted to address food waste by requiring all federal contracts over \$25,000 that involve the purchase, service, or sale of food to encourage donation of surplus food to nonprofit organizations that serve food-insecure populations.

However, current law is silent when it comes to reporting requirements, and it is unclear whether or not any federal agencies or contractors are following the recommendation.

Rep. McNerney’s legislation would strengthen the Federal Food Donation Act by implementing reporting requirements for the contracts to provide further clarity on food donations and waste reduction.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service, an estimated 31 percent of food loss happens at the retail and consumer levels, which translated to nearly 133 billion pounds and \$161 billion worth of food waste in 2010. That amount of waste has a dramatic impact on food security, resource conservation, and climate change. In 2014, an estimated 17.4 million American households were food insecure at some point during the year.

H.R. 4382 is supported by the **Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano** and the Emergency Food Bank of Stockton/San Joaquin County.

“The amount of food that is wasted is unacceptable when you consider that one in eight residents of Contra Costa and Solano Counties relies on the Food Bank’s services. The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano believes H.R. 4382 is an important step toward making food waste more visible so we better understand the excesses and scarcities within our food system,” said Carly Finkle, Advocacy Manager for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. “This bill will encourage food contractors to reduce surpluses in the amounts of food they prepare, facilitate partnerships with organizations that can safely rescue foods, and encourage the proper composting and recycling of wastes.”

“The Emergency Food Bank of Stockton/San Joaquin County supports the Food Waste Accountability Act. As part of the industry of providing food access to families in need, we, as with other organizations, are sometimes challenged with the available food supplies in our county. We hope that this bill addresses the concern of food waste throughout the U.S.,” said Mario Supnet, Executive Director of the Emergency Food Bank of Stockton/San Joaquin County. “Here in San Joaquin County, we partner with many organizations and share our resources to benefit our local community. Our partners support many unemployed and underemployed individuals and families. Increasing accessibility to federal food contractors can make a dramatic impact in our community by reducing food waste and leveraging those resources locally.”

H.R. 4382 has been referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.