

Public Health Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-382 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING EDIBLE FOOD RECOVERY.

Vote Date: 3/9/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 3/4/2026

File No.: 55

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

At a time when the cost of everything is rising, many Connecticut residents are struggling to make ends meet. A significant issue for many families is food insecurity. At the same time, federal food assistance and subsidy programs are being reduced while substantial quantities of edible food are being sent to incinerators. Wasted food is expensive to dispose of and is an environmental burden costing municipalities millions of dollars in disposal fees. This bill requires the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) to develop and implement guidelines for supermarkets to donate surplus food to nonprofit food distribution organizations. The donated food must meet all applicable safety standards and be the result of unsold surplus, compromised cosmetic appearance, near expiration, or package damage not impacting safety.

The bill applies to supermarkets 15,000 square feet or larger. Each supermarket must report its food donations annually to DCP starting January 1, 2028. DCP must report annually on the donations to the Public Health and General Law committees beginning February 1, 2028.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

The language reduces the bill's scope to include supermarkets of a certain size rather than all supermarkets and exempts other food establishments such as wholesalers and manufacturers.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Bryan Cafferelli, Commissioner, Department of Consumer Protection (DCP):

DCP supports the intent of the bill but has concerns with the definition of "retail food establishments". Such a definition would include warehouses, industrial food processors,

manufacturers and supermarkets of all sizes. This would require the collection of data from thousands of our licensees. The DCP cannot support the bill at this time since the Governor's budget does not include the resources necessary to accomplish the task.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Wayne Pesce, Connecticut Food Association (CFA):

Grocery stores are vital anchors in the communities they serve contributing significant resources through food donations and direct financial support. CFA supports the goal of this bill and respectfully notes that the food retail industry has been working on this issue for more than six years in partnership with nonprofits, food banks and state leaders. The current system is a carefully built public-private partnership that moves millions of pounds of food annually to the residents of Connecticut. CFA urges caution regarding any new reporting mandates that would create additional administrative burdens. Also, adding additional donation relationships would likely result in consolidation of donations resulting in a disadvantage to local nonprofits. While advancing this legislation, CFA urges the following considerations:

- Encourage retailers to remain open to working with approved nonprofits to understand the donation process and policies to identify and address gaps.
- Focus on how to bring resources to nonprofits such as refrigeration and transportation vehicles to safely and effectively receive food.
- Consider who is best to evaluate a "scorecard" since retailers are not regulators to calculate "charitable capacity".
- Rather than adding additional requirements on retailers already contributing, explore ways to encourage businesses that lack donation programs to become involved.

Bob Wall, Chairman, Sustainable Fairfield:

More than 30% of our waste stream consists of food. While at the same time many families do not have access to nutritious food. Substantial quantities of edible food are being discarded and sent to incinerators often out of state where they decompose releasing methane a potent greenhouse gas. This legislation would contribute to reducing hunger, lowering costs and preventing environmental harm.

Mary Hogue, a Fairfield Connecticut Resident:

Ms. Hogue submitted testimony supporting the comments of Bob Wall. She shared that in Fairfield the community has implemented "share tables, food recovery and composting programs in 18 of their public schools". If school children can be taught the importance of keeping food out of the trash, our state leaders should be able to build systems statewide toward this effort.

Alex Rodriguez, Environmental Justice Specialist, Save the Sound:

In his testimony, Mr. Rodriguez referenced a 2025 study that studied SNAP recipients in CT and Rhode Island. This study found that the most significant variable affecting food insecurity was lack of money and the most significant variable affecting nutrition insecurity was a lack of access to grocery stores. He urges passage of this bill that could potentially address these two issues.

Lori Brown, Executive Director, CT League of Conservation Voters:

Ms. Brown urges changes to the language in the bill. The current definition of organizations eligible for food recovery is too narrow and leaves out critical grassroots and mutual aid groups that serve our most vulnerable communities. Regarding the development of guidelines, the bill should include measures such as grant programs or “phased-in donation requirements”.

Marc Gonzalez, Program Coordinator, Conservation Law Foundation (CLF):

CLF recommends the definition of “food distribution organization” be replaced with “food relief organization”. This more inclusive language allows grassroots mutual aid networks, often the frontline for food access to our most vulnerable communities to continue their critical work.

The following individuals submitted testimony requesting a change in the definition of “Food Distribution Organization” to Food Relief Organization”:

- Madison Spremulli, Organizer, CT Zero Waste Coalition
- Karen Saggese, Lead Site Director, Food Rescue US- Fairfield County
- Julie DesCamps, Chair Waste Free Greenwich
- Meg Hourigan, New Britain resident

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Kathleen Panazza

Date: March 10, 2026