RES 20-038

Wilmington, Delaware
June 18, 2020

#4826

Sponsor:

Council Member Harlee

Co-Sponsors:

Council Members McCoy Oliver
Gray
Dixon

Council President Shabazz

WHEREAS, the 2020 global COVID-19 pandemic is increasing the insecurities and risks associated with food and poverty in historically and increasingly vulnerable households; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life; and

WHEREAS, poverty, unemployment/under-employment and inconsistent access to enough healthy food are considered the primary causes of food insecurity; and

WHEREAS, the New York Times reports over 30 million Americans have filed for unemployment due to COVID-19 related closures and layoffs; and

WHEREAS, the Brookings Institute in the COVID-19 Impact Survey and the Survey of Mothers with Young Children report that "by the end of April, more than one in five households in the United States, and two in five households with mothers with children 12 and under, were food insecure," and "almost one in five households of mothers with children age 12 and under, the children were experiencing food insecurity;" and

WHEREAS, Feeding America estimates between 9.9 and 17.1 million more people could become food insecure by the end of the year; and

WHEREAS, Charity Crossing, a nonprofit voluntary organization created in the Summer of 2015 by a group of volunteers who wanted to help the community that they live in by providing charitable initiatives in Wilmington and other communities in Delaware have been providing basic needs to the homeless and less fortunate members across our State and neighboring states since then; and

WHEREAS, Charity Crossing became aware of legislative actions in several European countries to address Food Waste and realized such laws would benefit Wilmington and other Delaware communities, individuals, and families; and

WHEREAS, Charity Crossing began sharing statistics and facts on Food Waste in the U.S. from Recycle Track Systems research identifying the following 2020 data:

1. The United States is the global leader in food waste, with Americans discarding nearly 80 billion pounds of food every year. This equates to more than $161 billion dollars.
2. Approximately 219 pounds of food is wasted per person every year
3. Nearly 40 percent of the U.S. food supply is wasted each year
4. Food waste makes up 22 percent of municipal solid waste in U.S. landfills

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is continuing to cause significant food supply disruptions, and therefore food shortages, in the State of Delaware; and

WHEREAS, organizations in Wilmington, Delaware such as Charity Crossing have distributed nearly 6,000 meals to the homeless, low-income families, and senior citizens, Feeding America has developed a COVID-19 Response Fund, the Food Bank of Delaware has established a drive-thru pantry, and Central Baptist Community Development Corporation has provided 281 Wilmington households with fresh produce from area farmers to feed a family of 4 for a week; and

WHEREAS, the Food Recovery Network, a University of Delaware student-run organization, also has the goal of reducing food waste by collecting excess food from the dining halls and donating the food to local food pantries; and

WHEREAS, Charity Crossing is petitioning the U.S. Congress and the Delaware General Assembly to develop and enact legislation for the food business industry to legally donate unsold food items to shelter homes or nonprofit organizations to feed the hungry and reduce food waste; and

WHEREAS, it is therefore now clear that changes need to be made to food industry businesses so that in times of health pandemics such as COVID-19 that affect the public welfare and health of the U.S. population that food industry businesses can legally donate

their unsold food items to shelter facilities, shelter homes and/or nonprofit organizations to feed the hungry and reduce food waste.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF WILMINGTON that this Body strongly supports the petition from Charity Crossing encouraging efforts by the Delaware General Assembly to pass legislation that would allow food industry businesses to legally donate their unsold food items to shelter facilities, shelter homes and/or nonprofit organizations to feed the hungry, reduce waste at our landfills, and possibly save money for the counties that spend tax payer dollars on landfill maintenance during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

Passed by City Council,
June 18, 2020

Attest: Maribel Seijo
City Clerk

SYNOPSIS: Food waste and food insecurity are significant problems facing the nation, our City of Wilmington and our State that have only been heightened in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis. The Wilmington City Council supports the petition from Charity Crossing encouraging efforts by the Delaware General Assembly to pass legislation that would allow food industry businesses to legally donate their unsold food items to shelter facilities and/or nonprofit organizations to feed the hungry thereby increasing food security, reducing food waste, decreasing waste at our landfills, and possibly saving money for our municipalities and counties on landfill maintenance costs during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.