



March 31, 2014

[Senator/Representative] [NAME]  
Via Facsimile: [202-xxx-xxx]

Dear [Senator/Representative] [NAME]:

We write to call your attention to the need to renew federal tax incentives that expired at the end of 2013. Three of these expired tax incentives help people and communities in Maine by encouraging businesses and individuals to donate wholesome food, valuable easements, and excess retirement savings for the benefit of the public. We join together in this letter to urge you to support efforts to extend these three vital tax incentives as quickly as possible.

The **food inventory enhanced tax deductions** has been a powerful tool in combatting food insecurity in our state. The tax provision allowed individuals, businesses, and corporations to donate food to nonprofits and deduct their cost basis plus one-half the difference between their cost and the market value of the donated goods. The value of the credit could not exceed twice the cost basis of the product donated. The urgency of restoring this provision cannot be understated; retroactive application of this tax provision late this year could discourage the donations of fresh produce that are vitally needed today to help our state's food banks and other nonprofit hunger relief organizations.

The **enhanced tax deduction for conservation easement** donations has helped America's land trusts work with farmers, ranchers, and other modest-income landowners to increase the pace of conservation by a third to over a million acres a year. Under a conservation easement, a landowner voluntarily agrees to donate or sell certain rights associated with his or her property, such as the right to subdivide or develop, and a private organization or public agency agrees to hold the landowner's promise not to exercise those rights. In exchange, the property tax burden of the land is lowered relative to its value. An extension of the incentive through 2014 will promote land conservation by helping more landowners receive tax benefits from the generous donation of development rights on their land.

The **IRA charitable rollover** allowed individual taxpayers older than 70 ½ years to donate up to \$100,000 from their individual retirement accounts (IRAs) and Roth IRAs to charitable nonprofits without having to treat the withdrawals as taxable income. In the first two years that the IRA charitable rollover option was available, individuals provided more than \$140 million in charitable donations to support the work of social service programs, religious organizations, arts and culture institutions, schools, and healthcare providers — all of which benefit Americans every day.

We urge you to act quickly to restore these important incentives for giving back to Maine communities and stand ready to assist you with information and testimonials to demonstrate the benefits to the people served by nonprofits in our state.

Sincerely,

Kristen Miale, Executive Director  
Good Shepherd Food Bank  
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Scott Schnapp, Executive Director  
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