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After a successful year in 2014, Hunters Against Hunger prepares for an even larger response this hunting season.

"A Montana law passed during the 2013 state session allows individuals to make a contribution that will help nonprofit groups process donated wild game for free distribution by Montana Food Bank Network to help feed people in need," said Ron Aasheim, spokesman for Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks in Helena. The law came into effect when Montana State Senator Kendall Van Dyk sponsored SB123 which passed to become 87-1-293.

As a result of the new legislation and Montana Food Bank Network's implementation of the Hunters Against Hunger program, hunters were able to donate over 38,000 pounds of big game to 24 different hunger-fighting organizations throughout Montana in 2014. Meat is an extremely expensive and rare commodity for most food distribution sites. "We have never in my time here had this much game. Truly a huge gift" explains Jill Holder, Operations Manager at Gallatin Valley Food Bank, about the impact of the program.

The Montana Food Bank Network is preparing for an increase in the amount of game donations as awareness increases this year. In partnership with Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks, hunters in Montana are being informed of the option of donating their big game. Hunters who legally harvested big game during the hunting season are able to donate the meat to help Montanans in need at no cost to the hunter. Only legally harvested or confiscated big game animals can be donated (deer, elk, antelope, moose and wild buffalo). No road kill can be donated. Any hunters interested in donating their game can deliver the big game to the nearest participating meat processor (authorized processors and more information for hunters can be found at mfbn.org/hunters-against-hunger).

To offset the cost of processing, anyone purchasing a Montana hunting license has the opportunity to make an on-the-spot donation to Hunters Against Hunger. A hunter who applies for or purchases a deer, antelope, elk, or wild buffalo license may also additionally donate to the program. The cost of processing the donated game is reimbursed to the processors by the Montana Food Bank Network. In 2014, the average cost of processing was \$1.74/pound.

Participation by meat processors and hunters are the keys to success to growing this program. Meat processors, hunters, or any others interested in becoming involved or would like more information about the Hunters Against Hunger program, can contact Jeff Gutierrez at the Montana Food Bank Network, (406) 215-1775 or visit mfbn.org/hunters-against-hunger.

The Montana Food Bank Network, located at 5625 Expressway, Missoula MT, secures and distributes donated and low cost food and grocery products annually to over 200 hunger relief agencies throughout Montana. The Network works to meet the immediate need for food while advocating at the local, state, and national level for policy changes to help eliminate hunger and food insecurity in Montana. The Montana Food Bank Network is a member of Feeding America. Visit mfbn.org to learn more about Hunters Against Hunger and other programs, make a donation or learn more about the Montana Food Bank Network.