

**Testimony of Rebecca Landis in favor of SB 727
Before the Senate Committee on Human Services
Feb. 21, 2019**

Chair Gelser and members of the committee:

I am market director at Corvallis-Albany Farmers' Markets. I write to express our support for **SB 727** and its twin HB 2837. This legislation is important to Oregon's farmers' markets because it supports the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks Oregon (DUFBO).

DUFBO, a well-regarded SNAP matching program, has proven to be successful across the state as well as in our markets. Matching the first \$10 of each SNAP transaction at farmers' markets is a proven strategy to allow more SNAP customers to access the fresh and local foods that will enhance their ability to work and learn. Those dollars in turn support small farmers, many of whom also qualify for SNAP.

CAFMO offered small and sporadic SNAP matching programs for several years, but we were not able to offer a full program until we received FINI funding for the 2016 and 2017 seasons. Consistent funding meant we could offer match at every market day. That consistency allowed a robust outreach effort that brought many new SNAP customers to our markets and infused new energy, especially in the smaller markets. A consistent program is also the most respectful way to treat our SNAP customers.

Oregon Trail customers were able to afford a much more nutritious diet, farmers were motivated to attend more markets per year, and our farmers' markets became more inclusive community places.

Encouraging SNAP spending in our communities is a simple but rapid form of economic development. When SNAP dollars go to direct marketing farmers, much more of the money stays in Oregon.

Beth Hoinacke of Goodfoot Farm, one of my farmers, notes in a Farmers Market Fund video that farmers' markets are vital to her business and that Double Up Food Bucks brings her new regular customers, which she values as a market farmer. Her neighbor at our Wednesday market, **Liz Shinn of Camron Ridge Farm** agreed: "We sell more to people who normally wouldn't go to a farmers' market ... It encourages people to buy fresh, buy local. It supports us. So it's a win-win situation for everybody."

In 2017 with the FINI grant, we spent \$34,996 in DUFBO/SNAP Match in Corvallis and Albany. In the wake of those now unavailable dollars, a new nonprofit called Fresh & Local, First! was created to seek grants and holding dine-in events for markets in Linn and Benton counties. We formed a separate organization because markets are generally not organized as 501(c)(3)s and thus cannot offer tax deductibility. Farmers' markets in Oregon are often lightly staffed -- if not all volunteer. It's tough to attempt this level of fundraising and still manage our markets well.

In 2018, local and regional fundraising did not meet the full need. Bit by bit, our nonprofit partners helped us obtain nearly \$12,000 that was distributed in Corvallis and Albany.

This amount, while notable, severely restricted the number of SNAP match days. We were able to offer the match once a month at each market -- timed to happen when almost all Oregon Trail

cardholders had benefits on their cards. Clearly SNAP customers appreciated what we offered, because they used up more than a third of the prior season's funding in roughly one quarter of the weeks previously offered.

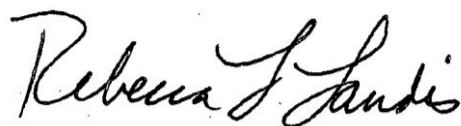
Total SNAP dollars redeemed at our farmers' markets provide a clear snapshot of how matching funds drive SNAP sales at farmers' markets.

In 2015, when we had a minimal match program, we redeemed \$37,200 in SNAP in Corvallis and Albany combined. During 2016 and 2017, the two FINI grant market seasons, we averaged \$51,705 per year. That's a 39 percent increase. Then in 2018, with locally scrounged match funding, SNAP redemptions dropped 22 percent to \$40,237.

The same analysis of transactions numbers is even more dramatic. There's an 80 percent jump in SNAP transactions from 2015 to the FINI years average, and a 34 percent drop from those years to the 2018 level.

Even with stepped up local efforts, it is difficult to find sustained funding via foundations and other traditional funders. We are continuing SNAP Match in hopes that our efforts in time will be recognized with greater funding. Passage of SB 727 or HB 2837 would encourage us to keep striving in this direction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Landis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rebecca Landis
Market Director