

SB 555 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery

Action Date: 02/25/21

Action: Do pass and requesting referral to Ways and Means.

Vote: 5-0-0-0

Yeas: 5 - Anderson, Gelser, Lieber, Robinson, Taylor

Fiscal: Fiscal impact issued

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: C. Ross, Counsel

Meeting Dates: 2/2, 2/25

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs Department of Human Services (DHS) to contract with a nonprofit organization that has established relationships with local food producers and outlets, to administer a program for recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, that matches the amount recipients spend on SNAP-eligible foods, to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables. Appropriates \$4 million General Fund dollars to DHS for distribution to said nonprofit and requires nonprofit to report to DHS as specified by December 31, 2023. Sunsets January 2, 2024. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Success of pilot program
- Mutual benefits for SNAP recipients, farmers, and local economies
- Collateral community-building impacts

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federally funded program operated through the Department of Human Services (DHS) that helps low-income families buy nutritional foods from participating sellers. SNAP benefits help more than half-a-million Oregonians, and more than 3,000 sellers participate.

In 2009, a Portland neighborhood coalition established a program to match SNAP dollars spent on fruits and vegetables, called "Fresh Exchange." This program expanded in the Portland area over time and, with receipt of federal grant funds in 2015, was taken to communities outside the Portland area and rebranded, "Double Up Food Bucks." A one-time allocation of \$1.5 million state dollars was made in 2019 to support ongoing efforts to expand the program statewide.

Senate Bill 555 appropriates \$4 million General Fund dollars for DHS to contract with a nonprofit organization to provide matching funds for SNAP recipients to purchase locally grown produce, in the same amount as they spend on other SNAP-eligible foods, in order to increase recipients' access to fresh fruits and vegetables. The measure requires the nonprofit to have established relationships with farm share sites, farmer's markets, and other local food outlets, and to report to DHS about the program and its impact on the purchase of local produce by December 31, 2023. These provisions sunset January 2, 2024.