

Co-Chairs Senator Johnson, Senator Steiner Hayward, Representative Rayfield, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nicki Passarella. I am a farmer leasing land in Gresham, living in Sandy. I am also a former farmers market manager and the current Woodstock Farmers Market board vice president. I am writing to request your support for SB5555.

As a farmer, last spring was scary. We had purchased seed and tools and weren't sure if or how we would be able to sell our vegetables. The large majority of our business happens at farmers markets, specifically the Woodstock Farmers Market from June through October and the Oregon City Winter Farmers Market from November through late spring.

A lot of small Oregon farmers who relied on restaurant sales shifted their crop plans to sell direct to consumers. We decided to double down on farmers markets and value the direct connection with those who eat the food we worked so hard to grow.

I love when DUFB participants come to my booth with their currency. Getting to see a kid's eyes light up when they can choose a vegetable is heartwarming, encouraging and reminds us exactly why we do what we do, especially in the heat of the summer when there aren't enough hours in the day to get it all done.

As a small scale farmer, any percentage of DUFB makes a difference to our business. And more importantly, without DUFB we'd lose a whole group of people we get to interact with around food, and that would be such a missed opportunity for ALL OF US, to say the least.

Locally grown and raised foods provided DIRECTLY to community members from their farmers is a full circle win for our local food system and the more community members who are able to access these nutritious foods, particularly some of our most vulnerable Oregonians, has an immeasurable value.

Please reach out to me directly if you would like to speak in more detail about this topic from the perspective of a small scale farmer.

Very sincerely,
Nicki Passarella
Sandy, Oregon