

Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee,

My name is Minerva Kalenandi. I am a resident of Beaverton. I am writing to request your support for SB 440 and 555.

SB 555 and SB 440 support the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks Oregon, a SNAP incentive program with a proven record of success. For every dollar spent on SNAP Eligible foods at participating farmers markets, farm share programs, and grocery stores across the state, shoppers will receive a dollar to spend on Oregon grown fruits and vegetables.

This program is important to me because I live on an extremely limited income of SSI and SSD and a small SNAP allotment. I have multiple food allergies and sensitivities related to my multiple disabilities and medications, and my caregiver needs to prepare most of my meals from scratch, because the cost of buying prepared foods, or easy to prepare foods that meet my allergy requirements is prohibitive on my budget. The Double Up Food Bucks DUFB Program enables me to purchase fresh and healthy foods that meet my requirements, and my budget, and stretch my food dollars. It also enables me to purchase food plants, so that I can grow some of my own food in a patio greenhouse that my caregiver and I have built. This helps me further my food dollars. It also improves my emotional wellbeing and sense of accomplishment

COVID 19 has impacted my ability to go to the store and shop on my own, as my multiple disabilities make me very high risk to die, should I contract the virus. DUFB helps me be able to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables in a safer, open air environment, as well as the plants, which help me so I don't have to go out as much. Also, I built relationships with farmers, nursery owners and vendors at the farmers market, and was able to have them set aside my orders ahead of time, to minimize the time spent out in public. Some of these relationships lasted after the markets closed for the season, and I was able to purchase from them at reduced prices in the off season.

The recent increase in state funding for DUFB was amazingly helpful, as it lasted all season, instead of running out after just a month or two. This was so helpful to my budget and my health. With DUFB, my health and wellbeing improve, I have fewer dr. visits, less physical problems. As a result, my emotional and mental health improve as well, as I am also bipolar schizoaffective, and I require fewer services.

I strongly urge you to continue and to even increase funding for the DUFB program, as it is a cost effective program. It reduces healthcare and mental healthcare costs in the community, by encouraging the consumption of fresh, healthy foods. Including food bearing plants encourages self sufficiency. It has made an enormous difference in my life and reduced my sick days and overall illness, physical, emotional, and mental.

Thank you for the consideration and for your service.
Minerva E. R. Kalenandi
Beaverton, Oregon