

Chair Williams and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rachael Ward. I am a resident in Eugene, Oregon. I am writing to request your support for **HB2292**.

HB2292 supports 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.

I have worked on all sides of SNAP incentive programs like Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) Oregon. I served as a farmers market manager, vendor, and shopper using SNAP benefits and programs like DUFB at different points in my life and career. Before coming to Oregon I administered a statewide SNAP incentive program in the state of Georgia where we worked with 65 farmers markets, farm stands and CSAs to match SNAP benefits up to \$50 for the purchase of fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables. Currently, I split my time between two non-profit organizations: one that supports farmers markets and SNAP incentive programs across the United States, and one that supports the local food system in Lane County. Through my 7 years of experience with SNAP incentive programs from all angles I can tell you that they truly work!

SNAP incentive programs, and DUFB Oregon specifically, bring two elements to fighting food insecurity not often found in other food assistance programs: support for local small-scale farmers and a sense of dignity and choice for shoppers. By matching SNAP dollars for local fruits and veggies, incentive programs direct federal funds to stay in local communities, supporting small scale businesses and bolstering the local economy. I have heard over and over from farmers in Lane County how important this program is to their livelihood and how much it means to them that they are able to sell their food to those with low-incomes without having to sacrifice their thin profit margins. Unlike food banks, where families often receive pre-made boxes of food that has been donated, DUFB Oregon allows SNAP recipients to choose which fruits and vegetables work best for their family's tastes, cultural traditions, and cooking situation. Allowing for this choice helps to combat the stigma that many shoppers face when paying for their food with SNAP benefits.

In my national work with non-profit organizations like Farmers Market Fund there is much conversation around bolstering state funding and support for SNAP incentive programs. Oregon is in line with proven best practices that show that when state legislatures fund and support SNAP incentive programs on a continual basis, the programs tend to be longer lasting and more

sustainable. The impact of the previous \$1.5 million state appropriation for DUFB has already been seen, as Farmers Market Fund was able to leverage the funds for matching of a \$1.9 million federal Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program grant over the next three years. Continuing to fund DUFB Oregon is just as important. Without an additional state appropriation to leverage, the possibility of Farmers Market Fund receiving more federal funding when their current grant ends could prove difficult.

Having a continuous, well funded SNAP incentive program in Oregon is more important than ever in the tough times created by the COVID pandemic. In Lane County, farmers markets saw drastic increases in the number of shoppers using their SNAP benefits to purchase local foods. Without funding from the state the weight of supporting the program falls on small and volunteer run organizations at the local level and smaller individual donors that are stretched thin. At a time when it is important for us to stay healthy and support our local economies, Double Up Food Bucks is a proven mechanism to do just that!

I strongly encourage you to show your support SB 440 & 555 and for the farmers, families, and communities that rely on Double Up Food Bucks Oregon to connect to their community, eat healthy food, and keep small scale farms afloat!

Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Rachael Ward

Eugene, Oregon