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1 March, 2021

Chair Williams and Members
House Committee on Human Services
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2292

Dear Chair Williams and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2292. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that has worked with Oregonians for more than 45 years to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choices. We created our Food Systems Program in 2015 to expand our work with partner organizations throughout the state who are working together to build and strengthen robust and healthy food systems across Oregon. This bill is supported by many of those partners because they simultaneously address multiple issues within those food systems.

Prior to COVID the Department of Human Services estimated that more than 600,000 Oregonians, one-third of those children, depended on SNAP benefits to acquire some of their food. This has only gotten worse during the pandemic. At the same time, small and medium sized farmers across the state struggle to bring produce to limited markets.

The Double Up Food Bucks program this funding will support has a proven record of success, and both the health and the economic benefits are well-documented. Matching SNAP benefits redeemed at local growers markets increases the purchasing power of food-insecure Oregonians, while at the same time incentivizing people to spend locally, supporting farmers and markets across the state. Those farmers then become stronger participants in their own local economies. This bill offers a rare “win-win-win” opportunity to accomplish multiple goals with one bill.

We urge you to support HB 2292. Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Holmes".

Greg Holmes
Food Systems Program Director
1000 Friends of Oregon