

Submitter: Donna Tarasawa
On Behalf Of: First Alternative Coop
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services
Measure: HB2728

February 3, 2023

Chair Reynolds and Members of the Committee,

My name is Donna Tarasawa. I am the manager of our Low Income Program at First Alternative Co-op in Corvallis. I am writing to request your support for HB 2728.

HB 2728 supports the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks Oregon, a SNAP matching program with a proven record of success. For every dollar spent on SNAP-eligible foods at participating farmers markets, farm stands, CSA programs, and grocery stores across the state, shoppers will receive an additional dollar to spend on Oregon-grown fruits and vegetables.

This program is important to me because our Co-op serves around 800 individuals and their families each year with a discount on their grocery purchases and Double Up Food Bucks Oregon benefits. These benefits make it possible for these food insecure community members to consume organic produce, which we believe is a healthier option. Our personal interactions with the people who receive these benefits confirm with us how important this program is in helping these families make ends meet. Being the only grocery store in Corvallis where consumers can gain Double Up Food Bucks benefits is also good for our organization, as these people come to us to purchase many grocery items beyond just produce.

These past few years have been challenging. The cost of food increased by over 10% in 2022, which impacted communities already facing disparities the hardest. Many Oregonians will be losing pandemic-related food assistance after this month. Double Up Food Bucks is one important way we can support community members struggling to afford food, invest in Oregon's farmers, and support local economies.

Passing HB 2728 would mean that more Oregonians participating in SNAP would have access to fruits and vegetables. It means more grocery stores, farmers markets, and more CSAs in more corners of the state can participate.

I urge your support for HB 2728.

Donna Tarasawa
Corvallis, Oregon

First Alternative Co-op Outreach Assistant