

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mallory Watson. I am a resident in Portland. 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.

My first experience with Double Up Food Bucks was as a SNAP participant in Ashland, Oregon. I was on an extremely tight budget, and while I wanted to eat healthy and support local agriculture, I couldn't afford it. When I found out about this program, it was so meaningful for me to be able to shop at the farmers market, feel a part of my community, and feel like my food dollars were really making an impact for others.

A few years later, I ran the farmers market booth for a friend's Willamina-based farm, where we accepted Double Up Food Bucks. I'm sure you're aware, when you run a small business, every sale really counts. We met shoppers who told us that it was the Double Up program that brought them to the market for the first time and kept them coming back. Gaining these new customers was so important to the business at that time and truly helped the farm grow to a place where they sold produce not only at farmers markets, but also through contracts with local grocers and restaurants in Willamina and McMinnville. This further benefited both the farmers and their local economy.

I have worked as the Double Up Food Bucks program coordinator for Farmers Market Fund since late 2019. My experience in this role has confirmed my prior experiences as a SNAP participant and a farmers market vendor. This program helps people in so many ways. I have heard from folks who say that Double Up is the only way they can afford the food they need for specialized medical diets. Others have shared that the program helps them to connect with their communities, or teach their children and grandchildren about healthy food and where it comes from. Some let us know that it's the only way they are able to put enough food on the table each week. All Oregonians deserve access to fresh fruits and vegetables. As the COVID-19 emergency SNAP allotments come to an end and food prices skyrocket, this program is so important to helping make that access possible.

I could go on and on, but I really just want to say again how impactful I know this program to be. Your support for this bill is your support for low-income families, small farmers, and Oregon's local economy.

Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mallory Watson".

Mallory Watson
Portland Resident