

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

For the record, my name is Jessica Land and I am a farmers market manager for Oregon City Farmers Market. I am standing before you today to verbalize my support for House Bill 2728. HB 2728 supports the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks, a SNAP matching produce program with a proven record of success.

As the only year-round farmers market in Clackamas County, the Oregon City Farmers Market serves a robust SNAP clientele throughout all the seasons, even in winter. Double Up Food Bucks provides the opportunity to access locally grown, fresh produce for households facing food insecurity. 66% of our customers live outside of OC and travel to our market from across the county and metro area to access our match program. Thanks to folks spending their benefits at farmers markets, dollars are kept local and support the economic development of our small farms. We hear countless stories from our customers the positive impact this vital program has on food access for Oregon's SNAP recipients.

The Double Up program allows customers the opportunity to try new produce varieties they otherwise would never try. This is due to education gained from farmer interaction plus the added dollar benefit allows flexibility to try new foods, thus increasing their intake of nutrient dense fruits and vegetables. Another benefit to Double Up is folks can buy in bulk during peak season produce months. Produce such as berries, beans, tomatoes, and storage crops allow households the opportunity to freeze, learn to can from our program partners and store winter squash.

Given the pandemic and rising food costs, Double Up helps alleviate negative food related impacts our state has endured. Not only does it help relieve pressure on families to make ends meet, but it also encourages the purchase of fresh eating options vs highly processed foods. This contributes to long term health benefits since Double Up allows greater buying power.

Each year our Double Up numbers and customers served have been on a steady increase, enough that we solicited additional local farms to sell at our market to meet the demand. Coincidentally this was a record year for our market in terms of funds disbursed for fresh produce purchases.

To give a tangible example of the positive effects this program has, I will leave you with a story (among many) of a woman that did not realize she could access Double Up Food Bucks at a farmers' market. She discovered this benefit through one of our outreach programs. Access to both SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks helped relieve her fear of food scarcity and allowed her healthier options for her family given free food boxes were often lacking in fresh produce.

This is just one of the countless examples of the lasting impact Double Up Food Bucks has on Oregonians.

Thank you for your consideration and service.

Jessica Land