

Chair Reynolds and Members of the Committee,

My name is Michaelyn Chess and I am a farmers market manager with St. Johns Farmers Market 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.

Double Up Food Bucks is critical to the St. Johns community. With inflation and increased cost of living, and many local residents living at or near the poverty line, our customers are looking for every possible way to stretch their grocery dollar. Double Up not only stretches that dollar, but provides access to fresh, nutritious, locally grown fruits and vegetables that many low-income folks would not otherwise be able to afford. One Double Up customer told us last year that the program allows him to eat more greens, which in turn makes him feel healthier. Double Up is also a great way for local farmers to generate extra revenue, which stays in the local community. In 2022, our farmers earned 7% of their total revenue from Double Up alone.

In 2022, St. Johns Farmers Market distributed over \$11,000 in Double Up Food Bucks and nearly 100 new customers used their SNAP card at our market for the first time. At a time when it seems that everything costs more, there is an obvious need for this critical food access program in St. Johns. Please consider supporting HB 2728 so that we can continue to bring fresh, local produce to all of our community members in St. Johns.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service.

Warmly,

Michaelyn Chess
Market Manager
St. Johns Farmers Market
Portland, OR