

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2728  
House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services  
Submitted by Molly Notarianni, Farmers Market Fund  
February 6, 2023



Chair Reynolds and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the Farmers Market Fund. Since 2012, Farmers Market Fund has worked tirelessly to make healthy, locally grown food accessible to *all* Oregonians, and we are excited to express our strong support of **HB 2728**.

This bill would support the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks Oregon (DUFBO): a SNAP matching program that has been changing Oregonians' lives since 2015. For every dollar spent on SNAP-eligible foods at participating farmers markets, farm stands, CSA shares, and grocery stores across the state, shoppers receive an additional dollar to spend on Oregon-grown fruits and vegetables. The program helps families bring home more fresh produce, gives Oregon's farmers a financial boost, and supports local economies (every \$1 of SNAP spent locally generates \$2-3 in local economic activity). We see the program as a win-win-win. **Double Up Food Bucks is a perfect investment as we work to stabilize Oregon post-pandemic, serving an immediate need of feeding people while investing in local farmers and local economies.**

**The cost of food has increased by over 10% in 2022, impacting communities already facing disparities the hardest.** Certain demographics, including communities of color, immigrants and refugees, single parents and caregivers, and our trans and gender non-conforming neighbors, perpetually experiencing the highest levels of hunger. February is also the final month of COVID-era emergency allotments, making this March the first time since April 2020 that most Oregon SNAP users will only receive their regular SNAP benefits.

A 2021 appropriation of \$4 Million in one-time funds from the State of Oregon provided essential funding that sustained the DUFBO program at farmers markets and CSAs, while supporting the expansion into select grocery outlets, allowing for greater access to fresh fruits and vegetables in areas of the state that are not currently served by farmers markets. Our coalition includes the Oregon Food Bank, the Oregon Farmers Markets Association, the American Heart Association, and the Pacific Northwest CSA Coalition: organizations with a long history of collaborating to approach ending hunger, improving health, and supporting farmers from complementary perspectives.

With this state support, in 2022 FMF was able to offer DUF2B at 78 farmers markets in 27 counties in Oregon! The dual impacts of the pandemic and inflation have created a dramatic increase in demand for the program. Farmers markets from Baker City to Brookings and Tillamook to Klamath Falls reported that their SNAP and DUF2B sales have doubled since 2021. Some sites saw as much as 275% growth. In addition to distributing more than \$1.37 Million in DUF2B to shoppers at farmers markets across Oregon in 2022, the program leveraged more than \$1.95 Million in SNAP sales, **resulting in over \$3.3 Million in sales for Oregon producers at farmers markets alone!**

The impacts of DUF2B aren't purely financial. Surveys of DUF2B shoppers demonstrate that the produce incentives work:

- 95% of SNAP shoppers purchased more fresh produce as a result of the match,
- 87% reported having more food in their house, and
- 88% felt an improvement in their overall health

Farmers market shoppers have also shared the personal impact of accessing more fruits and vegetables with Double Up Food Bucks:

*"This program seriously changes my quality of life... Being able to get the \$20 match makes a DRASTIC difference in my financial stability. I am able to get all the produce I need for a week. Being able to connect to my food sources is extremely impactful to me."*

*"It is a wonderful program that I find encourages me to buy and use more healthy vegetables in my diet. It is wonderful that I can use my SNAP money to buy local veggies!"*

*"I have learned a lot about fresh foods and processing them at home. It encouraged me to go vegan and I have cut down drastically on store bought foods, especially processed foods. I try to use as much of my SNAP benefits as possible at local farmer's markets."*

*"The DUF2B program helps me accommodate my special dietary restrictions due to an autoimmune disease while sticking to my SNAP budget...It helps so much- from my healthy eating habits to less stress over food budgeting, this program is a success in my life."*

*"It helps me feel supported in this community. Usually farmers markets are prohibitive by cost but this program allows me to enjoy fresh, local, quality produce that I wouldn't be able to have otherwise. It helps me engage with my community in this way, and thus offers a unique way to connect with my hometown in a way that I would not be able to otherwise."*

*“The older I am the more I notice how what I eat affects my body/health.the last 10 years have been a difficult struggle overcoming uterine cancer. It’s nearly impossible to earn enough when unwell and having access to regular fruits and vegetables is giving me the nourishment and healing my body needs. I am so thankful to this program and our wonderful local farmers.”*

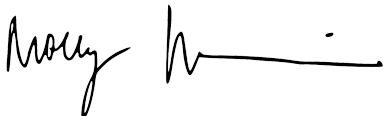
Despite DUFB’s success, SNAP matching programs currently exist at only two thirds of Oregon’s farmers markets. This leaves many farmers markets – including many in rural areas - without any SNAP incentive program. One quarter of Oregon’s farmers markets do not even have the necessary equipment in place to accept SNAP. This \$8 million appropriation would support the expansion of DUFB to all 120 farmers markets in the state. Individualized technical assistance will help markets who are not currently registered to accept SNAP develop the necessary tracking and accounting systems and obtain the required technology.

Supporting HB 2728 will also enable program partners to leverage additional federal funds. The Farm Bill includes \$250 million to support programs like DUFB, but requires a dollar for dollar match of state and private funds. **With the state’s \$4 million investment in 2021, FMF successfully secured nearly \$4 Million in federal matching funds;** any future state funding will also be eligible for this dollar for dollar federal match. With additional continued funding, the Double up Food Bucks program can maintain services at existing sites while expanding to new regions of the state, improving access to fresh, local fruits and vegetables for all Oregon SNAP participants. Without continued funding, the program will be forced to drastically limit the number of participating sites in the next biennium.

**Supporting Double Up Food Bucks is the perfect investment as we respond to rising inflation and work to rebuild Oregon post-pandemic: families win, farmers win, and Oregon’s economy thrives.**

Again, thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony. Farmers Market Fund appreciates your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Molly Notarianni". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Molly Notarianni  
Farmers Market Fund