

My name is Marielle Slater. I am Board Chair for the Bend Farmers Market. 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 our market, all its vendors, and individuals who are food insecure. The Bend Farmers Market is an agricultural market that supports Oregon farmers, ranchers and producers by facilitating EBT transactions and DUFB. In this way, all our vendors benefit from DUFB because even if they cannot accept DUFB they are more likely to benefit through EBT transactions because of the DUFB incentive.

Over the last 3 years, EBT and DUFB sales at the BFM drastically increased and amounted to almost \$78,000 in EBT and almost \$42,000 in DUFB purchases. Never before offering DUFB did we have such high EBT sales with over \$35,000 in 2021 alone. The \$42,000 in DUFB purchases supported local producers and our food insecure customers who often do not have the choice of purchasing the highest quality and most nutritious produce because of the high cost of fresh food. The combination of COVID-19 and inflation has really affected the low-income population and we are so glad to be able to offer DUFB support to make our market more diverse and equitable.

In the 2022 season year, we had over 1000 EBT transactions that were used by over 350 customers so based on the average family size this means that about 840 individuals benefitted from this program in Central Oregon in 2022 alone. Because Bend is a hub for Central Oregon, our market supports vendors that drive sometimes over 3 hrs to sell at our market so this program benefits economic development in rural communities not only in Central Oregon but also adjacent counties.

Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Marielle Slater

Bend, Oregon