

Submitter: Katy Kolker  
On Behalf Of: Portland Farmers Market  
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services  
Measure: HB2728

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

My name is Katy Kolker. I am Executive Director of Portland Farmers Market, a nonprofit organization that runs five Farmers Markets 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 locally-grown fruits and vegetables.

As a nonprofit organization that has been matching SNAP funds at farmers markets since 2008, this funding is incredibly important and impactful for Portland Farmers Market's large and growing base of SNAP shoppers, and our local food producers.

Food security in Oregon is at the highest rate in nearly a century. Today approximately one million Oregonians depend on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) to put food on their tables. SNAP works even better when paired with incentives that help families bring home more fruits and vegetables. The Double Up Food Bucks program gives SNAP participants access to farm-fresh produce they may otherwise be unable to afford.

At Farmers Markets, SNAP participants have the unique opportunity to access fresh produce in community spaces, and connect directly with those who grow their food. The Double Up Food Bucks program supports thousands of local farmers and small businesses, while giving food-insecure Oregonians the dignity they deserve to choose fresh, nutritious food produced within their community and their region.

The increase in food insecurity and SNAP participation in recent years has resulted in a dramatic increase in demand for Double Up Food Bucks. SNAP and Double Up sales have more than doubled at Portland Farmers Market's five locations since 2019, and farmers markets statewide have reported similar increases. We have been able to meet that growing need thanks in large part to the state's 2019 and 2021 allocations of funding to Double Up Food Bucks.

Every week we talk with SNAP shoppers who are excited to stretch their SNAP dollars and access fresh, healthy produce using Double Up Food Bucks at our

markets. Many SNAP shoppers tell us they have made the farmers market part of their weekly routine because of the Double Up Program. At our three neighborhood markets, SNAP-participating families also benefit from the OSU Extension Service's Food Heroes and Nutrition Education Programs. Hundreds of SNAP eligible families enjoyed cooking kits and kids nutrition activities provided by the Extension Service last year, and we look forward to continuing this partnership in 2023. It's great to see these programs working together to make an even bigger impact for families.

Supporting Double Up Food Bucks is the perfect investment as we work to rebuild Oregon post-pandemic: families win, farmers win, and Oregon's economy thrives. Please support HB 2728.

As a close partner and sister organization of Farmers Market Fund, we at Portland Farmers Market are very proud that Farmers Market Fund has earned your confidence in its ability to wisely distribute state and federal funds to effectively address food insecurity while supporting local food producers.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill, and to each of you for your service.

Sincerely,

Katy Kolker  
Executive Director, Portland Farmers Market  
Portland, OR