



**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2728**  
**House Committee On Human Services**  
**Submitted by Ashley Hess, OFMA (Oregon Farmers Markets Association)**  
**February 6, 2023**

Hello Chairwoman Reynolds and members of the committee. I am the Executive Director of OFMA (Oregon Farmers Markets Association) a non-profit organization that supports the more than 135 farmers markets throughout our state. I also serve on the Board of Directors at Farmers Market Fund. I write to request your support of 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 crucial for Oregon's farmers markets because it benefits both the farmers' small businesses and the families in the communities they serve. Families benefit from the increased purchasing power DUFB brings them, helping them access fresh, healthy, nutrient dense, locally grown food products; and farmers benefit from the increased revenue for their small businesses.

OFMA offers direct support to farmers markets as they complete the complicated process of gaining the ability to process SNAP benefits at their markets. Currently more than 90 markets in Oregon welcome SNAP shoppers. We are able to offer this direct, very needed support because of previous investments and expansion in the DUFB program. Currently, 78 farmers markets in 27 counties are enrolled in DUFB.

Oregon's farmers markets are working toward building more inclusive and healthy food networks. The improved food access that DUFB brings to communities across the state is extremely important to advancing equity for Oregon citizens. The impact of healthy food for young children in our communities cannot be overstated; developing children need sufficient nutrition and for many families, accessing healthy food that provides adequate nutrition for the children in their home is out of reach financially. DUFB is a program that bridges the gap for these families and smaller communities who have limited access to fresh, nutrient dense food.

Farmers markets in Oregon play an incredibly innovative and critical role in their local communities. With average annual revenues that exceed \$60 million dollars, Oregon's farmers markets operate with the unique distinction of being one of the most profitable, lowest-barrier outlets for farmers to market their products: with more than \$0.90 of every dollar spent at a farmers market going directly to the farmer (therefore staying within the local economy) versus an average of just \$0.15 of every dollar with other sales methods. Our last census in 2021 estimated that there were more than 6,000 small businesses operating at farmers markets in

Oregon, supporting more than 20,000 jobs throughout the state. These valuable institutions deserve our investment to continue to grow sustainably. Funding DUFEB is an incredibly effective way to invest in systems that build self-sufficiency, grow small business and support working families.

In conclusion, I believe that the DUFEB program is good for farmers, good for farmers markets and good for working families. The expansion of SNAP matching funds and technical assistance this program can provide is much needed to help farmers and farmers market shoppers across the state. I urge you to give this bill strong consideration.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ashley Hess". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ashley Hess  
Executive Director  
OFMA (Oregon Farmers Markets Association)