

Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jess Land. I am a farmers market manager in Oregon City. I am writing to request your support for **HB 2728**.

HB 2728 supports the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks Oregon, a SNAP incentive program with a proven record of success. For every dollar spent on SNAP-eligible foods at participating farmers markets, farm share programs, and grocery stores across the state, shoppers will receive a dollar to spend on Oregon-grown fruits and vegetables.

This program is important to me because access to Double Up Food Bucks changes what food looks like in Oregon SNAP recipient's homes. Fresh produce, beans and mushrooms replace cheap processed foods lacking in nutritional benefits. Instead, locally grown, less handled produce aids in providing a nutrient dense diet which has been proven to benefit long term health.

In addition, the extra funding allows customers to expand their palate. When one has such a restrictive budget, customers will lean towards the foods they recognize. Instead, Double Up Food Bucks offers greater opportunities to try new varieties of produce, purchase in bulk such as storage crops and berries to freeze for winter. Then, we factor in the educational portion the farmer can add. How to prepare it, complimentary recipes, the nutritional benefits, the history of a particular variety and what it does for overall health. The result? Engaged customers, sales for farmers, nutritional education, and opportunities to try new healthy foods.

During COVID, farmers markets were considered essential businesses. Thanks to Double Up Food Bucks, residents, those within our County and beyond were able to access our market year-round for locally grown food. We operated as a local food access point and with our extra funding, DUFEB recipients had one less stress in regard to food security.

Our farms saw double and for some, triple the number of sales which helped small local businesses and kept our economy moving during a time of stagnation and unpredictability. Customers sought out markets as a source for healthy nutritious food, especially critical during a time of unknowns with the pandemic. Maintaining nutrition was and remains key to ensure healthy Oregonians and their future generations. Access to healthy food is a basic human right and thanks to DUFEB, helps our mission in decreasing hunger gaps within our state.

I ask you to support HB 2728, and to fully fund the bill before the Oregon Legislature adjourns. Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Jessica Land
Market Manager/Executive Director Oregon City Farmers Market