

Submitter: Tim Wilson
On Behalf Of: OFMA and FMF
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2979

Dear members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water:

Thank you for the opportunity for OFMA's Co-president, Rose Williams, to speak on the importance of the Food System Resilience grant programs that would be renewed with the passage of HB 2979. We heard some questions about the SNAP technical assistance component during the hearing and wanted to follow up with more information on that component.

The \$500,000 of funds contained in HB 2979 for SNAP technical assistance would support the Growth Grants program. This program is a partnership with Farmers Market Fund to expand the acceptance and use of SNAP at Farmers Markets across Oregon. Through the program, markets can apply for funds to cover the costs of registration, equipment, and software that enables them to accept/process SNAP payments at the market and training for their staff to make sure this payment information is handled with proper care, SNAP program guidelines are followed, and all necessary reporting and compliance procedures are in place. Additionally, these grants support the behind-the-scenes work needed for farmers markets to implement programs that incentivize customers who receive SNAP to shop at the farmers market. Double Up is one example of this type of program, but many markets also host other types of independent incentive programs, and offering Double Up is not a prerequisite to receiving a Growth Grant.

Furthermore, Growth Grant funds do not support the actual matching dollars in Double Up or incentive programs like it. Instead, these grants support the costs of materials, technology, equipment, and the people power it takes for markets to offer incentive programs. SNAP can be accepted by markets regardless of matching programs. We support increased food access and incentives to shop locally, as provided by programs like Double Up.

We also wanted to clarify that there are no plans for the Double Up Food Bucks program to end in 2025. Our partners at Farmers Market Fund are advocating for funding for Double Up to be renewed in the Oregon Department of Human Services Agency budget, the same place it was awarded in the 2023 biennium. Federal funds have also been secured to support Double Up through 2026. There is no duplication between Double Up funding in ODHS's agency budget (which provides a portion of the funds needed for Double Up to match SNAP dollars) and the funding for Growth

Grants (that supports markets with the equipment, supplies, and staff time needed to offer SNAP and incentive programs) in HB 2979.

We hope you will continue to support this important program. Please let us know if we can answer any other questions.

Sincerely,

Tim Wilson
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