

Submitter: Zoe Bradbury DeSurra
On Behalf Of: Valley Flora
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5526

Dear Joint Subcommittee on Human Services,

My name is Zoe Bradbury DeSurra, owner and operator of Valley Flora Farm in Langlois, OR. I am writing in strong support of the Double Up Food Bucks Program, which helps low income families across Oregon access fresh produce that would otherwise be unaffordable to them.

Our farm is the only commercial-scale fresh produce farm along our rural stretch of the Southern Oregon Coast. We've been feeding our community for over twenty-five years and are deeply committed to building a resilient local food system that prioritizes food access for all. Coos and Curry County, where we operate, have some of the highest rates of food insecurity in the state due to poverty and food deserts created by our rural, remote geography.

One of the most successful ways we have been improving food access in our community is by tapping into the Double Up Food Bucks Program (DUFb). When someone with SNAP food benefits signs up to receive one of our weekly CSA (community supported agriculture) subscriptions, DUFb covers half the cost. That makes it possible for low-income families to afford farm-fresh, local produce year-round and leverage their SNAP dollars for the greatest benefit.

We are in strong support of DUFb because providing nutrition incentives like this not only helps reduce hunger and poverty in our communities, it also creates two other tangible outcomes:

- 1) Improved health outcomes for individuals: we have countless anecdotes from CSA members over the past fifteen years who report that eating our produce all season has dramatically improved their health. Stories include people who have stopped taking prednisone and other prescription meds, lost weight, and been able to better manage their diabetes thanks to a diet of fresh vegetables. Better food for better health is a sensible, preventative health care approach that comes at a far lower public cost than medical intervention.
- 2) Positive economic impact for our farm: SNAP membership has grown to 15% of our CSA, up from 0% four years ago. The SNAP/DUFb program has opened up an entirely new market for our farm, creating a profound win-win for our business and the folks it feeds. My hope is to continue to grow our SNAP membership and our DUFb participation to meet the need for better food access in our community, all the

while supporting the farm's bottom line.

We know that when everyone has access to healthy food, we're all better off: Kids do better in school, health and well-being improves, and our economy thrives through the support of local businesses. This is true in every corner of Oregon - in rural, urban, and suburban communities alike. Healthy eating equals healthy communities equals a thriving Oregon.

Please fund the Double Up Food Bucks Program to the fullest extent possible in the DHS budget. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Zoë Ida Bradbury DeSurra
Valley Flora Farm
Langlois, OR