



Friends of Family Farmers ♦ PO Box 751 ♦ Junction City, OR 97448

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Chair Gelser-Blouin, Vice Chair Linthicum, and members of the Senate Committee on Human Services:

My name is Alice Morrison and I am writing today on behalf of Friends of Family Farmers. Friends of Family Farmers is a nonprofit organization representing more than 1,600 small and midsize, highly diversified and local market farmers across Oregon. We are in support of SB 611 and the Food for All Oregonians campaign because we know that having enough food to eat is a prerequisite for a happy and fulfilling life, no matter where you are born. Farmers and ranchers make putting food on the tables of Oregon families their business, and everyone deserves the opportunity to feed themselves in a consistent, dignified and culturally relevant manner.

Not only do farmers in Oregon produce the food that people buy with SNAP but many farm families and farm workers are SNAP recipients. The fact that farm work is often seasonal, and many farmers and farm workers experience wide swings in income as well as low wages and small margins across the industry means that people growing the food for our communities don't always have money to put it on their own tables. Couple that with the higher percentages of immigrants and guest visa workers in agriculture than other industries, and we know that our sector has folks who benefit from the SNAP program, or would if they were able to qualify. Not only that, but if children are able to qualify for assistance, families can divert money that would have been spent on food to other necessary expenses like housing and utilities. Also farmers and farmworkers alike often do not have a robust retirement account to fall back on in old age. We need to take care of people as they age and make sure that our seniors have enough to eat.

Not only does our community participate in the SNAP program, but we also benefit from the economics of SNAP. According to the 2024 study from the Journal of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association titled "Economywide impacts of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" by Jessica Osanya and Jeffrey J. Reimer, "Studies using input-output multiplier analysis have shed light on this issue. For example, a \$1 billion increase in SNAP expenditures has been found to be associated with a \$1.50, \$1.74, or \$1.79 billion increase in national gross domestic product (GDP), depending on the time period and circumstances being studied (Blinder & Zandi, [2015](#); Canning & Stacy, [2019](#); Hanson, [2010](#)). Subsequent studies suggest that the benefits accrue disproportionately to rural areas compared with urban areas, in part because of the stimulus to relatively rural food and agricultural sectors (Vogel et al., [2021](#))."¹

Not only does a dollar of investment in SNAP tend to create a very powerful return for our economy, this impact is felt most keenly in rural and agricultural communities. This is because

¹ Osanya and Reimer, 2024. "Economywide impacts of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program" <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jaa2.115>

we are benefiting not only people in our communities but the farms, ranches, processors and food companies located in our rural areas. We also have the opportunity here to open up even more local food to local people by expanding SNAP eligibility. If more people qualify for SNAP, they can also take advantage of local food matching programs for fresh fruits and vegetables like Double Up Food Bucks and shop at their local farmers market. This is another opportunity for them to put money directly into the farmers pocket and have it be reinvested in the community. According to a 2018 study by Rahe, et al² conducted at Oregon State University, local food producers also increase economic activity in their areas at higher rates than non-local market focused producers: “When determining the multiplier effect, which is the ripple effect of spending money in the economy, local farmers were determined to be 1.74, compared to 1.38 for non-local farmers.” This is a good investment for Oregon.

This is also something that rings true for me personally, beyond the benefits that FoFF sees to the farmers we serve. When I was a farmworker in Lane County I was on SNAP in the winters even though I made good wages in the summer. The people I worked alongside who were not US citizens made the same wages as me, paid the same taxes as me, and worked the same hard hours as me, but I was able to get support in the winter and their families were not. When I was a grad student at the University of Oregon, I received SNAP benefits because I qualified for work study employment. The students who had come from overseas and were vital parts of our programs and community, and worked alongside me did not get the same assistance. It is time for us to take care of our community members, acknowledge the contributions of immigrants in Oregon and make sure that everyone has enough food to eat.

Please support SB 611 and ensure that there is Food for All Oregonians.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alice Morrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Alice Morrison
Co-Executive Director
Friends of Family Farmers

² Rahe, et al. 2018 “Economic Impact of Local Food Producers in Central Oregon”
<https://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/economic-impact-local-food-producers-central-oregon>