

Chair Monnes Anderson, members of the committee:

I'm here to support passage of SB 1567, on behalf of the Oregon Farmers' Markets Association, Corvallis-Albany Farmers' Markets, and the many direct marketing farmers who are key to revitalizing local food systems, stimulating grass roots economic development, improving food security and providing healthy choices for Oregon families.

I'm technically part of that last category. My husband and I live on a small farm just south of Corvallis that we call Territorial Road Orchard, where we have an orchard and grow a little produce as well.

I'm going to let other witnesses run the numbers and just tell you what I see on the ground after 17 seasons of managing farmers' markets.

The Senior FDNP does not just bring direct participants to the markets and farm stands. Seniors often bring one or two other generations and thus share the experience of buying fresh fruits and vegetables directly from the farm that grew them.

Seniors often have memories of older fruit and vegetable varieties that are not found in supermarkets. In my husband's stall they fall into reverie upon seeing the bright red little Snow Apple (also called Fameuse) that hangs on the trees into November.

So why does that matter in a public policy sense? Seniors contribute to the resurgence in cooking and preserving whole foods, rather than eating just highly processed foods from far away. When today's 20- and 30-somethings get interested in canning, most don't call Mom but hit speed dial for Grandma.

Senior vouchers do bring revenue to farm direct marketers that we otherwise would not see in our market tills. And the \$32 is meaningful to the seniors, if the number of calls I field each year is any indication.

But I think it's also important to look at it from a broader perspective. We want everyone to have access to the high quality, nutritious foods we grow in Oregon.

The Farm Direct Nutrition Programs, along with increased access to Oregon Trail cards at farmers' markets, help us put the lie to the notion that healthy food is only for those with healthy bank account balances.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify for SB 1567.