

JACKIE DINGFELDER
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 23



OREGON STATE SENATE
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

To: Senate Committee on Health Care and Human Services
From: Senator Jackie Dingfelder, Senate District 23
Date: March 11, 2013

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 757

Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee, thank you for hearing SB 757 and for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of this bill.

Many of you will remember the difficulties Congress faced when deliberating over a new farm bill last year. During the discussions over a new farm bill, Congress failed to reauthorize the Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program. This program helps thousands of Oregon seniors access fresh and healthy food, while also supporting our local farmers. However, without a source of authority, The Oregon Health Authority cannot distribute funds for Farmer's Market Nutrition programs.

While Congress did pass a one-year extension for the program as part of the "fiscal cliff" agreement this fall, the Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program was left without funding for three months. The one-year extension of the 2008 farm bill authorizes and funds the program until September 30, 2013. In absence of Congressional action before September 30, federal authorization for this important program will expire. In Oregon, farmers may and often do, make claims until the very end of the market season on November 30th. Unless Congress acts, farmers will be unable to make claims during the last two months of the 2013 market season.

Distributing state funding for this program is also contingent on federal authorization of the program. This means Oregon seniors with low incomes could lose out on the program entirely if we are unable to distribute the funds that we contribute to the program.

SB 757 fixes this potential problem by simply providing authorization to OHA to administer the program in the absence of federal authorization, ensuring seniors access to the valuable benefits of fresh produce. This is a simple bill addressing a rather technical problem. I urge your support of SB 757.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jackie Dingfelder".

Senator Jackie Dingfelder
Senate District 23