



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 13, 2013

Chair Witt
Members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Chair Witt and member of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing today in support of House Bill 2992 of which I am a Co-chief sponsor with our colleague Representative Unger. This bill gives authority to the Oregon Health Authority alongside the State Department of Agriculture to operate two programs, the Farm Nutrition Direct Program and the Senior Farm Nutrition Direct Program. These two programs are already in existence federally, and are administered statewide by the Department of Human Services. This bill will solidify their existence within in the state of Oregon.

The Farms Direct Nutrition Program the enables Women, Infants, Children (WIC) participants to purchase at their local farmers market, with vouchers. The Senior Farms Direct Nutrition Program enables seniors age 60 plus who are eligible for medical assistance under ORS 414, or supplemental nutrition under ORS 411.806 and 411.845 to purchase from local farmers markets. The programs help those who are often at highest risk of poor nutrition.

Low-income mothers who are breastfeeding or with children up to age three are WIC participants. This is a critical stage in life, for both mother and child, to have a healthy, well-rounded, nutritional diet. A nutritious diet sets the path to a healthy future for the entire family. The Farm Nutrition Direct Program is an essential aspect in ensuring the nutrition of the youngest Oregonians and that is why it is important we create a stable program that can continue to help support the health of young Oregonian families.

Low-income seniors eligible through the previously stated laws are also a sector in need of a nutritious diet. Seniors with health concerns are in an especially vulnerable situation. Having a nutritious diet will help to maintain the health of participants for years to come. Participants in the Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program will be at great risk if this program were no longer in existence, which is why I support giving the Oregon Health Authority the authority to administer this program.

CC: Committee Administrator Beth Patrino

