



MEASURE: SB 757  
EXHIBIT: 17  
S. HEALTHCARE & HUMAN SERVICES  
DATE: 3/11/13 PAGES: 1  
SUBMITTED BY: Sen. Thomsen

**Senator Chuck Thomsen  
Testimony Supporting SB 757**

Chair Monnes Anderson and members of the committee, thank you for hearing SB 757 today and for allowing me to testify in support of this bill.

I'm here today in reference to the Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program which is a state-administered federal program that gives vouchers or checks to eligible, low-income seniors to purchase local, fresh fruits and vegetables purchased directly from authorized farmers at farm stands and markets. Going back as far as 2009 the Oregonian reported an estimated number of 17,000 seniors that were accepted in the program.

I'm sure many of you might recall the issues congress faced as they deliberated over a new farm bill last year. In these discussions, congress decided not to re-authorize the Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program.

Congress passed a one-year extension for the program as a part of the "fiscal cliff" agreement last fall and the program was left without funding for three months. This 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<sup>th</sup>, federal authorization for this crucial program will expire. In Oregon it is very common for farmers not to submit claims until the very end of the market season on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Unless congress acts, farmers will be unable to submit claims during the last two months of the 2013 market season.

Distributing state funding to this program is also contingent on federal authorization of the program. Without action, Oregon's low income seniors can lose out on this effective program completely if we're unable to distribute the funds that we contribute to the program. SB 757 fixes this issue by providing an authorization to OHA to continue administering the program without federal authorization, ensuring Senior's access to these benefits. This is a simple bill that fixes the issue. I urge you all to support SB 757.

Sincerely,

Senator Chuck Thomsen,  
District 26