

**TO: The Honorable Sara Gelser, Chair
Human Services and Early Childhood Committee
and members of the committee**

From: Rebecca Landis on behalf of the Oregon Farmers' Markets Association

Subject: Testimony for SB 700

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 700.

I am the immediate past president of Oregon Farmers' Markets Association (OFMA), a membership organization whose mission is supporting local agriculture and healthy communities by strengthening and promoting Oregon's farmers' markets. I am a current board member at large and advise OFMA on various policy issues.

In addition, I have had the privilege of managing farmers' markets since 1995, just before Oregon began offering coupons (now vouchers) for participants in the Women, Infants & Children program to spend in farmers' markets. A few years later, we added the Senior component, and the Farm Direct Nutrition Program was extended to farm stands.

I'm writing to support the proposed appropriations for both parts of FDNP as well as the potential Emergency Board set-aside that would get more fruits and vegetables on plates in food insecure households by funding incentives for SNAP and perhaps other nutrition programs.

While I spend a lot of time and energy on growing SNAP in Oregon farmers' markets, it's worth stopping to appreciate some special qualities of the WIC FDNP, a modestly sized program that *educates as it feeds*.

The FDNPs focus solely on fresh fruits, vegetables and herbs, and they are aimed at sales by farm direct growers, who spend those additional revenues right in their local communities.

We see multi-generational family groups using vouchers in farmers' markets, and I'm sure that is also true at farm stands. Without FDNP, many families might never be introduced to the benefits of buying fresh produce direct from the grower.

Some families stretch their vouchers over weeks or months, while others buy in quantity to save money on preserving foods they can eat over the winter. Either way, I am thrilled to see kids learning how to manage food budgets and enhance the quality of family meals.

When I get calls from clients seeking to use their FDNP, I find it's an opportunity to make sure WIC and Senior participants are aware that they can use their Oregon Trail card at their farmers' market. Eligibility is not the same, but there is overlap.

The state WIC program operates FDNP in conjunction with the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Through the years, both agencies have worked hard to improve the program and make the connection to the Senior FDNP as seamless as possible.

In conclusion, I would like to underline the triple-win nature of FDNP and other nutrition programs, which are possibly the fastest and surest economic stimulus in your legislative toolkits.

FDNP provides healthy food to vulnerable populations, helps local farm direct producers increase their customer base, and helps the communities where the farmers spend their earnings.

Thank you for your time and consideration of SB 700.