



Partners for a  
Hunger-Free Oregon

*Ending hunger before it begins.*

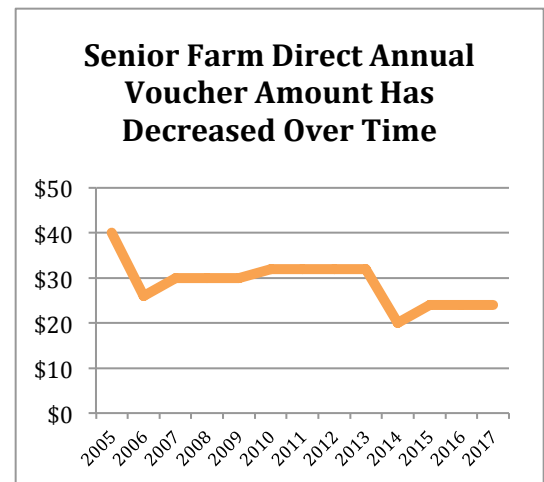
To: Senate Committee on Human Services  
From: Matt Newell-Ching, Public Affairs Director  
Subject: Support SB 1029 - Fund the Farm Direct Nutrition Program  
Date: April 10, 2017

Everyone is better off when Oregonians have access to fresh, nutritious, local produce. Yet the reality is that hunger is increasing in Oregon, despite it decreasing nationwide. The rapidly growing cost of housing in all corners of Oregon means that seniors and families often sacrifice food quality as a strategy to afford rent and other essentials.

**SB 1029 funds the Farm Direct Nutrition Program (Farm Direct).** This helps two groups of people gain better access to fresh Oregon produce: low-income seniors, and families with kids under the age of five that participate in the WIC program.

#### How Farm Direct works

Participating households receive a book of \$4 checks that can be redeemed at farmers markets and farm stands. The total benefit to participating seniors is \$24 per year, and the total benefit to families participating in WIC is \$20 per year. In 2015, farmers earned \$1.16 million in Farm Direct sales to seniors and WIC families. Farm Direct participants cite many benefits, including better access to nutritious foods and a sense of community belonging.



#### The Governor's Budget shortfalls Farm Direct. SB 1029 helps fix it.

We were disappointed that the Governor's budget request would result in **9,650 fewer WIC participants and over 2,400 fewer low-income seniors being served per year.**

In addition, seniors participating in the program are subject to a lottery based on funding levels. Fully-funding FDNP at \$3.3 million for WIC families and \$434,000 for low-income seniors would make a significant difference in the ability of families with young kids and seniors to be able to afford Oregon produce.

At bare minimum, we request \$300,000 in additional funding for FDNP families participating in WIC (\$200,000) and low-income seniors (\$100,000) above the governor's request of \$260,000 to maintain current service levels. Oregon should not balance its budget on the backs of low-income seniors and families with young children.