



Nella Mae's Farm
Cove, Oregon

February 17, 2019

To Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee:

My name is Nella Mae Parks and I live in Cove, Oregon. I have a small vegetable farm and sell produce to local restaurants, grocery stores, at my farmstand, and at the La Grande Farmers' Market. I am also a member of the board of directors of the La Grande Farmers' Market. **I am writing in strong support of SB 727, the Double Up Food Bucks bill.**

This program helps low-income seniors and families in Union County and elsewhere in the state access more fresh, healthy, Oregon-grown produce and increases sales for farmers like me. For the last three years we have had Double Up Food Bucks at our market. In 2018 we matched over \$10K in SNAP dollars, which meant more local produce in people's stomachs and more dollars in farmers' pockets.

Over 4,900 people in Union County use SNAP benefits to buy food for themselves and their families. Double Up Food Bucks increases the amount of federal SNAP dollars going to local growers and supporting local businesses. Local growers spend their dollars locally and this benefits our community.

Additionally, if Oregon establishes funding for the Double Up Food Bucks program, we will be eligible for matching federal dollars for the program. But these dollars are only available to use if we pass SB 727.

Double Up Food Bucks increases access to healthy food and positively encourages and people to "eat their vegetables." In a state where only 11% of citizens are eating enough produce, it is something we could all do better. "Eating your vegetables" is not just good for public health, it is good for the health of small farms like mine.

As a vegetable grower, I know kale for everyone, but I think everyone, regardless of income, should have the opportunity to try it and the myriad other vegetables out there. Programs like Double Up Food Bucks make it possible for more people to eat healthy foods and for local farms to be healthy too.

Please feel free to contact me with further questions.

Sincerely,

Nella Mae Parks
Owner, Nella Mae's Farm
Cove, Oregon