

19 February 2019
Chair Gelser
Senate Committee on Human Services
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE Salem, OR 97301
RE: SB 727

Dear Chair Gelser and Committee Members:

I am writing to request your support of SB 727, which would provide funding for Double Up Food Bucks at farmers markets, CSA, and grocery stores across Oregon.

I am currently serving my second term of service with the University of Oregon's RARE Americorps Program. As an Americorps service member, I am paid a living stipend that barely covers my cost of living. I receive SNAP benefits to subsidize this living allowance. Double Up Food Bucks stretches my SNAP benefits enough so that I can shop at the farmers market and buy high quality produce—otherwise, I would have to buy my produce at supermarkets that ship in produce from California and farther. The farmers' market boasts so much more variety—more textures, colors, flavors, and types of vegetables that I would never see at a Safeway. I know that it's better for me, because I feel better when I eat it. When I can only afford to buy produce at the grocery store, I simply don't eat as much produce because it's not as delicious or interesting.

Further, Double Up Food Bucks allows me to live out my values. I know that small- and mid-sized farms that use organic practices are better for the land, for communities, and for the people who work there. Eating local food connects me to the people who grew it—there's a relationship there instead of just a transaction. When I eat the produce I've purchased from the farmers market, I know that I'm supporting a food system that nurtures the people, communities, and landscape that I hold dear. Double Up Food Bucks does something that a lot of social assistance programs do not: it recognizes that people with low-incomes have values, enjoy community, and need connection. Just a small public investment allows them to participate in a really beautiful aspect of our communities in Oregon—buying local, healthy food from people we know.

I greatly appreciate your consideration.

Best,

Lauren Johnson

Resident, Corvallis