

Testimony in Support of SB 5526
Joint Ways & Means Human Services Subcommittee
Submitted by Molly Notarianni, Program Director
March 24, 2019



Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair Nosse, and members of the Committee:

I am the Program Director at Farmers Market Fund, and I am writing to ask for your support of SB 5526, maintaining elevated funding levels for the Farm Direct Nutrition (FDNP) WIC and Farm Direct Nutrition Senior programs for the 2019-21 biennium.

In 2017-19, the Legislature appropriated additional money for these essential programs in one-time funds. This increase allowed the Oregon Health Authority to distribute an additional \$1.2 million in vouchers that enabled low-income Oregon families to purchase healthy, locally grown produce. With these funds, 54,000 WIC mothers and children and 47,800 low-income seniors purchased fresh fruits and vegetables from their local farmers. At the same time, 600+ of Oregon's family farmers made \$3.2 million in additional profit through participation in these programs in 2017-2018.

The current budget does not recommend any increases in the base budget and does not include any new one-time funds. The Senior Farm Direct Nutrition program is funded at just over \$6,000 – just **2% of what the program distributed in the 2017-19 biennium**, which means the Senior FDNP program would be effectively eliminated due to spending limitations of the matching federal grant which makes state funding essential to defray the costs of certification and benefit distribution. The need for this type of support is especially great for seniors: only 2 out of 5 eligible adults over 60 are enrolled in SNAP, according to the USDA¹.

I coordinate the Double Up Food Bucks Oregon program, which doubles shoppers' SNAP benefits at farmers markets, allowing them to bring home more fresh fruits and vegetables. The FDNP program is an essential companion to Double Up Food Bucks, serving two unique populations that Double Up Food Bucks does not target: seniors and nutritionally at-risk mothers and children. The FDNP WIC and Senior programs have a long track record of success, increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and supporting local farmers. Please support maintaining elevated funding levels for the Farm Direct Nutrition (FDNP) WIC and Farm Direct Nutrition Senior programs for the 2019-21 biennium.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Molly".

Molly Notarianni
Program Director, Farmers Market Fund

¹ <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pressrelease/2015/020215>