



**TESTIMONY FOR SB 5526  
JOINT WAYS & MEANS HUMAN SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE  
SUBMITTED BY PHILLIP KENNEDY-WONG  
MARCH 26, 2019**

Fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet is essential to everyone’s health. Unfortunately not everyone can afford to. Oregon Health Authority’s **Farm Direct Nutrition programs for WIC families and low-income seniors** help these vulnerable populations by providing vouchers for purchases of fresh produce at participating farmers markets and roadside stands.

**State funding is essential to defray the costs of certification and benefit distribution for the Farm Direct Nutrition programs.** Federal funding has been historically flat and not based on the overall number of eligible households and individuals. State funds allow more food insecure WIC families and seniors to participate in the Farm Direct Nutrition programs.

In addition to the health benefits, the programs support Oregon farmers, providing a source of income. Of the 600 plus farmers that participated in the program in 2017-18, \$3.2 million in income was generated when combining both federal and state funds. Equally important is the educational benefit that comes from the community space created with farmers markets. Consumers become knowledgeable of the food they eat and who produces them.

**Oregon Food Bank respectfully requests the same level of funding as the 2017-19 biennium by calculating one-time funds as part of the base budget for the 2019-21 biennium.**

<b>ANTI-HUNGER PROGRAMS</b>	<b>STATE AGENCY</b>	<b>2017-19 ADOPTED</b>		<b>2019-21 BASE BUDGET</b>	
		<b>Base Budget</b>	<b>One-time</b>	<b>Governor’s Recommended</b>	<b>REQUESTED w/ one-time funds</b>
<b>Farm Direct Nutrition: Low-Income Seniors</b>	<u>OHA</u>	\$86,888	\$200,000	\$6,025	<b>\$286,888</b>
<b>Farm Direct Nutrition: WIC Families</b>	<u>OHA</u>	\$227,421	\$1,000,000	\$262,598	<b>\$1,227,421</b>

In 2018, 54,000 WIC mothers and children and 47,800 low-income seniors received vouchers. Not calculating \$1.2 million from 2017-19 into the base budget for 2019-21 would mean that 20,000 fewer nutritionally at-risk mothers and their children would be able to guarantee fresh produce as part of their diets. With just \$6,025 recommended for 2019-21, the senior program would be effectively eliminated.

Thank you for your consideration.

