

Chair Williams, Vice-Chair Leif, Vice-Chair Ruiz, and members of the committee.

I am Daria Land, Executive Director of the Rogue Valley Growers Market. Thank you for the opportunity to share the very real impact our SNAP/EBT patrons receive throughout the season from the Double Up Food Bucks program at our Rogue Valley Growers Markets.

Annually we disperse on average between \$50K-\$60K of SNAP/EBT dollars along with money raised for the Double Up Food Bucks (DUFB) program. Due to the high demand and true need for DUFB dollars, we typically begin the program each season in June and it runs out by October. Our market season begins each year in March and ends at Thanksgiving. If we could raise more DUFB funds we would run the program from March through November. Every dollar would be utilized by Oregon Trail customers. On opening day, it is the first question asked, "When will you have DUFB dollars at the markets?"

The Rogue Valley Growers Market organization is committed to finding funds year after year for DUFB bucks as we feel it is a healthy incentive to buy fresh products and all locally grown produce by patrons with food insecurity concerns. They can visit our markets, shop for nutrient dense food by using their SNAP/EBT card and double their buying power up to \$10 each market visit for fresh fruits and vegetables. They can even purchase food plant starts and grow their own garden.

And what is amazing is 94-96% of all DUFB dollars dispersed annually are redeemed at our markets. We feel this is an incredible benchmark and a true indicator that our patrons have grown to rely on and utilize every dollar.

In 2020 the pandemic and the Almeda and Obenchain fires profoundly affected our local community and we saw more than ever residents relying on our markets for COVID-19 safety, open-air access to shop for their essentials and record-breaking use of SNAP/EBT and DUFB dollars. In fact, we dispersed \$5K more than we raised and are still attempting to come up with those funds.

At our most recent board of directors meeting, it was unanimously felt we must find a way to raise more funds for 2021 as our community is struggling. Many have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 closures. Many are displaced due to the loss of 3,000 structures in our region. They simply need to be able to put food on the table for their families. It's not a want. It's a critical need.

If there is one more thing I could share with policy makers in Salem, it is that the DUFB program not only supports our most vulnerable residents in southern Oregon, but the dollars stay local and our growers and farmers benefit. Two families are profoundly impacted and the DUFB program helps further ensure the sustainability of our local farms and farmland.

Thank you for your time and your consideration. You are welcome to visit our markets anytime and you will see firsthand the DUFB program in action. Thank you, Representative Marsh, for giving the Rogue Valley a voice.

Respectfully,

Daria Land
Executive Director
Rogue Valley Growers Market