

Greetings members of the committee. My name is Vanessa, I live in Portland, and I am writing to express my support for HB 2292 to implement and expand upon a program to make local produce more accessible to SNAP recipients. This bill provides support to Oregonians at a time when much of the state is experiencing food insecurity and local farmers have struggled to stay afloat against financial and environmental challenges. According to a recent report from OSU, a quarter of Oregonians experienced food insecurity during 2020, and the reliance of many on assistance provided through SNAP has skyrocketed during the pandemic. According to the Oregon government's website, applications for SNAP benefits is expected to continue to increase as the effects of the pandemic continue. Not only does this bill increase availability and accessibility for SNAP recipients, it encourages an appreciation for our local food system and for food products that are healthy and fresh. Expanding the Double Up Food Bucks program to include more food retailers across the state supports Oregonians everywhere, whether they are the ones growing the produce, selling it, or eating it. Having grown up in a family that relied heavily on food stamps each month, I have a strong appreciation for programs that continue to expand upon the SNAP program, continuing to iterate upon the basic benefits to include more options, more flexibility, and fewer barriers to healthy, local produce. Promoting locally grown food also improves the environmental footprint of our food, since it depends less on products that had to be shipped far distances to reach our plates. I'm fully in support of programs like this that value accessibility and promote good health for our bodies, our planet, our local economy, and our community. For Oregonians across the state that are in need of support, you must pass HB 2292. Thank you for your consideration.