



February 1st, 2020

Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee,

My name is Matthew Stanley. I am the General Manager of the Astoria Co-op in Astoria, OR. I am writing to request your support for **SB 440 and 555**. These bills support the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks Oregon, a SNAP incentive program with a proven record of success in our store.

Our co-op is an independent community-owned consumer cooperative. A large part of our mission is to provide access to healthy food for everyone in our community. Unfortunately, healthy fresh food is not always affordable compared to processed food. The Double Up program allows many of our shoppers and rural residents to double their purchases of fresh fruits and veggies. We all need more fruits and veggies in our diets, and this creates a huge incentive for SNAP participants to add them to their daily eating habits.

Everyday, we get to hear from folks who participate in this program and they always express how important Double Up is to their monthly food budget. There is also a positive economic impact for the co-op. We sell more produce than we would otherwise and because we are a locally owned cooperative, our earnings are re-invested back into the co-op and community at large. Although we are an essential service as a grocery store, we have had a negative impact from Covid-19 on our store's performance, mainly because we had to close large parts of our deli operation. Without the continued funding for Double Up it is unlikely we could continue this program on our own.

During a global health crisis, it is crucial that we all have access to nutritious foods. Our immune systems certainly need optimal nutrition in the event we contract a novel virus. But we are all under elevated stress levels too, especially those that rely on SNAP and other safety nets to survive. Please vote in favor of these bills and keep healthy fresh produce an accessible part of our community's diet.

Thank you for your consideration and service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matt Stanley", written over a horizontal line.

Matt Stanley

Astoria, OR