

Chair Williams and Members of the Committee,

My name is Nicki Passarella. I am a farmer and former farmers market manager in the Portland metro area. I am writing to request your support for HB 2292.

Roughly 90% of my farm's sales occur at farmers markets. I love engaging with a broad spectrum of people about local, seasonal eating, and sharing education about how valuable this way of eating, and indeed, way of life, is. The DUFB program is a tangible way to diversify the pool of shoppers at a farmers market and breaks down both real and perceived barriers for folks that may not be comfortable shopping at a farmers market.

I love when DUFB participants come to my booth with their currency. Getting to see a kid's eyes light up when they can choose a vegetable is heartwarming, encouraging and reminds me exactly why I do what I do, especially in the heat of the summer when there aren't enough hours in the day to get it all done.

As a small scale farmer, any percentage of DUFB makes a difference to my business. And more importantly, without DUFB we'd lose a whole group of people we get to interact with around food, and that would be such a missed opportunity for ALL OF US, to say the least.

Locally grown and raised foods provided DIRECTLY to community members from their farmers is a full circle win for our local food system and the more community members who are able to access these nutritious foods, particularly some of our most vulnerable Oregonians, has an immeasurable value.

Particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for farm-direct, locally grown foods is more important than ever. Meaningful, long lasting healing can start with eating foods that taste good and nourish your body; and procuring them from the hands that grew them only enhances the healing. If we do not invest in our community members, how can we expect healing to occur?

Please reach out to me directly if you would like to speak in more detail about this topic from the perspective of a small scale farmer, food community builder with a dozen years spent in many roles at farmers markets.

Very sincerely,

Nicki Passarella  
Gresham, Oregon