



January 2, 2021
Testimony In Favor of SBs 440 and 555

Chair Gelser and Members of the Committee:

My name is Trudy Toliver. I am Executive Director of Portland Farmers Market in Portland. I am writing to request your support for **Senate Bills 440 & 555**.

These two bills support the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks Oregon. This program is important to us because it incentivizes SNAP recipients to use their benefits at farmers markets by giving them an additional up to \$10 per visit to spend on local farm fresh fruits and vegetables.

Portland Farmers Market became dedicated to matching SNAP benefits starting in 2008. Today, your financial support of this program allows farmers and small businesses at our markets to thrive and it gives our food-insecure neighbors the dignity they deserve to choose fresh, nutritious food.

In 2020 at our five markets, we distributed 148% more money in DUFEB over 2019. While the pandemic increased the need, with 28% more market shoppers using SNAP, we met that need **only because of the State's 2019 allocation of funding to DUFEB**.

Last year, farmers markets were deemed "essential places of business." To honor that, we constantly listened to the health experts then redesigned our market layouts and sanitation schedules to accommodate distancing and safety precautions for shoppers and staff alike. We worked with our vendors to set up 6-foot spacing lines for shoppers and minimal product touching at their booths. We opened each market as planned except during the hazardous air quality days due to wildfires.

Our farmers kept producing and local shoppers kept coming to purchase fresh local food in our safe outdoor environments. Many growers reported very good sales, but that was balanced by additional costs for safety equipment, extra staffing at markets and losses due to workforce and other challenges on the farms.

We received numerous notes of appreciation from shoppers reporting how safe they feel and grateful they are for the opportunity to buy from local producers during this uncertain economic time. Notes came from long-time shoppers, new shoppers and shoppers who use SNAP as well.

Our markets spread from downtown to some of Portland's lowest income neighborhoods. Our downtown market on Wednesdays is near several low-income apartment buildings. We met many low-income senior citizens shopping at the market

for their first times. They let us know how happy they were to use DUFB to buy the crisp fresh produce they always wanted.

DUFB also attracts families to our markets. At our Kenton Market in North Portland, SNAP-participating families, attracted to the market because of DUFB also benefited from the OSU Extension Service's Food Heroes Program. Last summer, about 100 families enjoyed shopping and then educated their kids about food with the take-home cooking kits provided by the Extension Service. It's great to see these programs working together to make an even bigger impact for families.

As a 4th generation Oregonian, I appreciate that my legislators prioritize funding this kind of incentive program. I love that it supports Oregon farmers, leverages federal money and it's focused on keeping people healthy with nutritious food.

As past director of Farmers Market Fund, I'm so proud that Farmers Market Fund has earned your confidence in its ability to wisely distribute state and federal funds that address food insecurity.

Thank you for your consideration of these bills and to each of you for your service.



Trudy Toliver, Executive Director

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