

Submitter: Patrick Monroe
On Behalf Of: First Alternative Food Co-op
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services
Measure: HB2728

Chair Reynolds and Members of the Committee,

My name is Patrick Monroe. I am a Resident in Corvallis. I am writing to request your support for HB 2728. HB 2728 supports the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks Oregon, a SNAP matching program with a proven record of success. For every dollar spent on SNAP-eligible foods at participating farmers markets, farm stands, CSA programs, and grocery stores across the state, shoppers will receive an additional dollar to spend on Oregon-grown fruits and vegetables.

This program has been everything I feel strongly about in government today. I work as a Produce Manager at First Alternative Co-op and feel strongly about buying Local Oregon Produce. I sacrifice my wages to work a job that intrinsically benefits my soul and society. Focusing on buying local keeps money within Oregon which is tremendously important to us all. I feel it is in the best interest of Oregon to support people buying local and seasonal produce as in the end it supports the bottom line of our government. Keeping the money in Oregon is very important to us all. Even larger companies based outside of Oregon, this program would drive people to buy Oregon product in order to be part of this program. I feel there could be a credit or something given for products purchased in Oregon, some small incentive - smaller than the net gain for us just to push people to do so. As more and more get accustomed to purchasing this way they will find the benefits not only in cost but in overall quality. As your constituency demands more and more on this front it is important to step up to meet the drive put forward with consumers.

I've always said if my money was going somewhere worth while that I believed in I would want to pay more taxes. Often there are government programs that we vote on, we never seen a direct impact. This one directly impacts our farmers and buying local, this is the food system I believe in, this is the government I believe in and most of all a society that helps each other, in particular those who just want healthy food. This is what government should be all about, in a time when our federal government seems to be dragging their feet and busy trying to get on CNN and Fox News we look to our local government on the state level. State government is what will lead us into a better state, as sadly me and others have largely given up on "the feds". Please help us keep faith in what our state government does, let us support a system that we can vote for and see the impact, vote for someone we may see one day, someone we can thank, we can show gratitude towards. With a desperate plea for change I hope for the paradigm to shift in government, I hope for this to be the shift. Please don't remove a program that is finally doing some good, something shown to have

some serious impact on a food system choking to breath.

These past few years have been challenging. The cost of food increased by over 10% in 2022, which impacted communities already facing disparities the hardest. Many Oregonians will be losing pandemic-related food assistance after this month. Double Up Food Bucks is one important way we can support community members struggling to afford food, invest in Oregon's farmers, and support local economies.

Passing HB 2728 would mean that more Oregonians participating in SNAP would have access to fruits and vegetables. It means more grocery stores, farmers markets, and more CSAs in more corners of the state can participate.

If there is anything I can do directly please do not hesitate to reach out. I would happily speak clearly about my passion in the improvement of our food system and I believe this is the first step.

I urge your support for HB 2728.

Patrick Monroe
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