

May 2, 2023

Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Amii Chong. I am the Executive Director of St. Johns Center for Opportunity in North Portland. We own and operate the St. Johns Farmers Market. I am writing to request your support for **HB 2728**.

HB 2728 supports the expansion of Double Up Food Bucks Oregon, a SNAP incentive program with a proven record of success. For every dollar spent on SNAP-eligible foods at participating farmers markets, farm share programs, and grocery stores across the state, shoppers will receive a dollar to spend on Oregon-grown fruits and vegetables.

This program is important to me because it supports our organization's ability to offer Double Up Food Bucks to the most vulnerable and food-insecure residents of our community. We run our food access programs at a loss because we believe they are important for creating access to fresh, healthy, locally grown, culturally-relevant food for these frontline communities. They also generate a significant amount of the income that our farmers make at the Market. HB 2728 is critical for our ability to continue to offer Double Up Food Bucks at the St. Johns Farmers Market.

As one of our DUFB participants stated, "I was able to buy my first carton of blueberries in three years thanks to this program." Food access programs have tangible, health-forward impacts for the residents they serve. The dual impacts of COVID-19 and high inflation have hit our vulnerable and food-insecure residents the hardest, and greatly reduces their ability to feed their families fresh, healthy produce. By offering DUFB at St. Johns Farmers Market, we are able to help folks feed their families nutritious local produce while also bolstering our local farmers.

Thanks to the increased state funding for Double Up Food Bucks in 2021, our Farmers Market was able to significantly expand our DUFB program and support many more families. We sincerely thank you for that, and hope that you will continue to support this amazing program that touches the lives of so many low-income families.

I ask you to support HB 2728, and to fully fund the bill before the Oregon Legislature adjourns. Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

All my best,

Amii Chong
North Portland

