



# SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

Oregon State Legislature  
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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Senate cultivates fresh food programs for vulnerable Oregonians**

*HB 2992A benefits farmers, solidifies fresh food programs for low-income mothers and seniors*

SALEM—As farmers markets across the state open this week, the Oregon Senate voted today to make sure that seniors, pregnant mothers, and infants have access to a nutritious, healthy foods in order to support their health. HB 2992A, which passed the Senate on a 27-0 vote with three excused, authorizes the Oregon Health Authority to maintain the Farm Direct Nutrition Program and Senior Farm Direct Nutrition program, which allows Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) recipients and low-income seniors to purchase food directly from local farmers markets and roadside stands.

“Locally-grown produce is a great source of nutrition, and we ought to make sure the most vulnerable Oregonians can get fresh fruit and vegetables to stop hunger and maintain a healthy diet,” said Senator Alan Bates (D-Medford). “We can help our farmers and prevent food insecurity by sustaining these critical programs.”

Currently, the Farm Direct Nutrition Program and Senior Farm Direct Nutrition Program rely on federal grants from the United States Department of Agriculture. In 2012, funding for these grants dried up for a three-month period when the fiscal cliff disagreement jeopardized re-authorization of the programs. HB 2992A sets up a mechanism for Oregon to fund these programs directly in the absence of federal grants by authorizing the Oregon Health Authority and the Oregon Department of Agriculture to administer assistance to low-income seniors and WIC recipients.

“This bill is a win for young families, a win for seniors on limited incomes, and a win for Oregon farmers who grow quality produce,” said Senator Chris Edwards (D-Eugene). “We need to keep vulnerable Oregonians healthy, and these programs do that while injecting millions of dollars into Oregon’s local farm economy.”

HB 2992A will help Oregon meet two goals to help alleviate hunger in the state: First, the bill assists in cultivating a strong regional food system through local farms and farmers markets, and second, helps improve the safety net and assistance for vulnerable seniors, women, and children.

“We can’t depend on the inaction we’ve seen in Washington, D.C. to feed our seniors and children. That’s why it’s so important that Oregon have its own way to sustain these programs,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum. “HB 2992A supports Oregon farmers and rural communities while providing fresh, nutritious food to people who really need it.”

The bill will now go to Governor John A. Kitzhaber for his signature.

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