



TALKING POINTS: FRUIT & VEGETABLE INCENTIVE BILL

SB1245

WHAT DOES THIS BILL DO?

SB 1245 appropriates \$400,000 of the State general fund in fiscal year 2018-2019 to be used to uplift local Arizona farmers and our Arizona economy by providing funding for a produce incentive program for SNAP participants so they can purchase locally-grown produce items at participating farmers markets, farm stands, community supported agriculture (CSA) sites, and grocery stores.

HOW IS THE PROGRAM CURRENTLY FUNDED?

It is funded by the USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Grant Program, which is appropriated through the Farm Bill.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS PROGRAM?

Produce-incentive programs are a WIN-WIN-WIN for our communities.

- **Farmers increase sales and farm profits:** Since 2015, SNAP spending at Arizona farmers markets has increased by more than 290%.
- **More food dollars stay in the local economy, strengthening communities:** Every dollar spent on local produce generates \$1.79 in local economic activity.
- **Families bring home more healthy foods:** 84% of Arizona SNAP customers report their family buys and eats a greater variety of fruits and vegetables as a result of Double Up Arizona.

DOES A PROGRAM LIKE THIS EXIST IN THE STATE?

Yes. Double Up Food Bucks Arizona (Double Up AZ) is a state-wide fruit and vegetable incentive program. For every dollar spent on SNAP-eligible foods at participating farmers markets across the state, recipients receive a dollar to spend on Arizona-grown produce items, up to \$20 per visit. The bill would secure additional funding for this program. There are also local incentive programs being offered through Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona, Heirloom Farmers Markets, and International Rescue Committee.

WHY IS STATE FUNDING NEEDED?

- Currently the program only operates in farmers markets and farm stands. Additional funding would allow us to expand the program to grocery stores in high-need areas that don't have access to farmers markets.
- FINI is a competitive grant program. In order to keep the federal dollars coming to Arizona, funders like to see that the state is also committed to the program.
- Farm Bill is up for re-authorization this year. Sonny Perdue, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, is very supportive of the FINI Program; however, funding for the program is contingent on Farm Bill negotiations.

DOES THE INCENTIVE INCLUDE ARIZONA-GROWN DAIRY OR PROTEIN?

Not yet. The program is currently limited to fresh fruits and vegetables since this is a requirement of the federal funding. A state investment would allow us to pilot the program in small grocery stores and eventually expand the program to additional Arizona-grown products.

IS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AWARE OF THE BILL?

Yes. In 2017, a Food & Agriculture Policy and Advisory Council was developed as part of Governor Doug Ducey's initiative to reduce obesity and related health issues. This council has identified the Double Up Arizona fruit and vegetable incentive program as their number one recommendation to Director Killian and Governor Ducey as an innovative solution to strengthen the food system in Arizona.

HAVE OTHER STATES PASSED SIMILAR LEGISLATION?

Yes. Similar legislation has been passed in New Mexico, California, and Michigan.

CAN ANY PRODUCE BE INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM?

The incentive only applies to produce that is grown in Arizona.

WHO ARE THE BILL'S SPONSORS?

- Senator Kate Brophy McGee
- Senator Lisa Otondo
- Senator Frank Pratt
- Senator Bob Worsley
- Representative Heather Carter

HAS THE BILL BEEN ASSIGNED TO COMMITTEE?

Yes. The bill has been dual-assigned to Senate Appropriations and Health and Human Services committees.

QUESTIONS? CONTACT:

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