

On behalf of the Lewiston Farmers' Market, agricultural producers, and people of Maine:

The Lewiston Farmers' Market serves around 500 purchasing customers each week from the Lewiston/Auburn area. We are an association that includes some paid staff hours and is held together with robust board and volunteer participation. We processed \$10,028.00 in Maine Harvest Bucks this year, and \$3,065.00 in Bumper Crop bucks to provide shoppers with extra purchasing power on their SNAP/EBT allocations for fruits and vegetables.

This is an excellent program for EVERYONE! Our market benefits from increased customer base, producers benefit from more accessibility to their goods. More funds are retained within our economy and more food reaches neighbors. We strive to eliminate barriers to food security for our community. This can come in the form of our open air market format, locally produced crops of interest, and the invigoration of connection with fresh foods for new neighbors and our next generations.

Scott Jillson, at Jillson's Farm in Sabattus:

"This program helps us provide fresh vegetables for people that may otherwise not receive them and helps our bottom line at the farmers market. We look forward to continuing this program for us and for our customers at the Lewiston Farmers' Market.

This funding helps promote the program to link more community members using SNAP to the market, helps cover the costs our market incurs to maintain accessibility to processing equipment, and most importantly, helps cover the cost of the redemption of HB.

We ask for the "**CONTINUOUS FUNDING at the \$600,000 level per year.** If it is continuous, then the market (and MFFM) can plan for growth and expansion of the program without any funding uncertainties or interruption." -MFFM

It is essential for our farmers and food insecure community members, as well as our market to maintain consistent and reliable expectations regarding MHB and Bumper Crop bucks in order to continue to reach and grow a customer base that is eager and excited to participate in our local food economy. This is an investment in the future of

not only healthy food, sustainable agriculture, and economic growth, but also a resilient, vibrant and welcoming arena that incentivises wellness for all.

Thank you for your time,

Elizabeth Nelson

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