



**Interested Party Testimony- House Children and Human Services Committee
HB 96 — FY26-27 State Operating Budget
February 27, 2025**

Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett and members of the Children and Human Services Committee — Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 96 in support of Produce Perks Midwest’s funding request which would appropriate \$2,000,000 in each fiscal year within the Department of Job and Family Service’s TANF Block Grant for Produce Perks to expand services to reach more SNAP recipients across the state.

My name is Tevis Foreman, and I serve as the Executive Director of Produce Perks Midwest, Ohio’s lead agency administering nutrition incentive programming.

Produce Perks, Ohio’s *Nutrition Incentive Program*, provides a \$1:\$1 match for SNAP beneficiaries to purchase fruits and vegetables from Ohio farmers, farmers markets and small-business retailers. In 2024 our nutrition incentive programming generated approximately \$3.5M in healthy food purchases for low-income households in communities across Ohio (*this is an economic impact of over \$12M*). These dollars are going directly back into local economies, increasing household food and nutrition security, improving health outcomes for our most vulnerable – and empowering individuals to make healthy lifestyle choices while providing dignity as a consumer.

Millions of Ohioans struggle with food insecurity and rely on SNAP benefits to feed their families. Produce Perks stretches those SNAP dollars further and doubles the purchasing power of SNAP shoppers to buy healthy, fresh fruits and vegetables.

It’s important to recognize that our work is not only increasing affordable access to healthy foods, but it is directly strengthening and stimulating local economies – supporting our small-scale farmers and small-business retailers in communities throughout Ohio. We place great value on our local agricultural systems and our Ohio-owned businesses and have demonstrated that we can combat hunger (with dignity) while strategically building the infrastructure and capacity of our local food systems.

Extensive research has shown a significant correlation between food insecurity and chronic health conditions among all age groups. Conversely, there is strong data evidencing the positive impacts of nutrition incentive programming (i.e. Produce Perks) including improved health outcomes, increased household food and nutrition security, and overall well-being.

Produce Perks is a nationally recognized program, advancing years of investment and the collective work of partners statewide. **Since 2017, Produce Perks has generated more than \$17M in healthy food purchases in Ohio – generating over \$32M in local economic impacts.**

Since 2017, we have experienced nearly 900% growth in our nutrition incentive programs. We are building healthy and resilient local food economies – making strategic investments in the infrastructure and capacity of our localized food systems; improving health outcomes by integrating our work within the healthcare sector; and providing the dignity of choice to low-income Ohioans in communities across our great state.

With \$4M from the state, Produce Perks will expand programming to reach 40,000+ low-income consumers, benefit 1000+ Ohio farmers, and support 200+ farmers markets and Ohio-owned small-business retailers in communities throughout Ohio's highest-need counties.

I implore you to support our amendment of \$2,000,000 in each fiscal year within the Department of Job and Family Service's TANF Block Grant for Produce Perks to expand services to reach more SNAP recipients across the state. I can answer any questions at this time.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tevis Foreman', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Tevis Foreman
Executive Director
Produce Perks Midwest, Inc.