

Katie Blais  
Farmers Market Manager, Mount Hope Farm  
In support of Bill HB-5536

I have been the Mount Hope Farmers Market Manager for the past eight years, and our organization has been offering Bonus Bucks at our location since 2015. The Bonus Bucks program at our Farmers Market has been a game-changer for so many in our community. It empowers more families to access fresh, healthy, local food and directly boosts sales for our hardworking farmers and vendors. It is truly a win-win, strengthening our local economy and promoting healthier eating habits. We've seen firsthand the joy it brings and the tangible difference it makes!

In fact, through our SNAP and Bonus Bucks Program, the Mount Hope Farm Farmers Market generated over \$20,000 in positive impact through vendor reimbursements last year alone. On any given weekend, we have 10-18 vendors who are eligible to accept SNAP payments through our Bonus Buck program, allowing another stream of revenue to their daily sales.

Knowing this, and given the uncertainty of funding on a national level, it's time for the State of Rhode Island to support this vital program and ensure it can continue to operate, nourishing our community and strengthening sales for our Bristol market farmers.