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27 March 2019

Chair Lively
House Committee on
Economic Development
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2810

Dear Chair Lively and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2810. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that has worked with Oregonians for more than 40 years to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choices.

We created our Food Systems Program in 2015 to expand our work with partner organizations throughout the state that are working together to build and strengthen robust and healthy food systems across Oregon. Strong food systems not only improve the health of Oregonians, but they also support economic development in both rural and urban areas across the state by providing markets for our farmers, ranchers, and food entrepreneurs.

The James Beard Public Market envisioned at the OMSI campus will provide these benefits and more. It will provide farmers and ranchers from across the state opportunities to promote and sell their products at a permanent, year-round public market location. Other portions of the venue will provide opportunities for food entrepreneurs to build their businesses and for educational and health programs to serve the public. This will all be done in a way that creates jobs and supports farmers and ranchers across the state, allowing them to become stronger participants in their own local economies. Food producers as far away as the Rogue Valley are already excited about the opportunity to expand their markets into the Portland Metro area.

Public markets like the one envisioned here serve as magnets for social and economic activity in communities across the country and throughout the world. Many of the most successful ones involve some element of a public-private partnership. The Market Foundation has already amassed an impressive list of supporters and potential partial funders. We believe that it is appropriate for the state to invest in the health of Oregonians and in Oregon's economy by providing some of the funding for the pre-development expenses for this venture.

We urge you to support HB 2810. Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Holmes".

Greg Holmes
Food Systems Program Director
1000 Friends of Oregon