



House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

February 3, 2021

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network in support of HB 2785, which would establish a State Meat Inspection Program Facilities Grant Fund. I urge your support as well.

The legislature recently enacted the State Meat Inspection Program. However, to be successful the State Meat Inspection Program needs a concurrent grant fund to help expand processing capacity, especially in rural Oregon. HB 2785 would establish a \$10 million grant program to fund expansion, upgrades, and technical and other necessities, such as equipment.

The Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network supports efforts to incorporate healthy, local food into school meals. Increased support for meat processing will help custom meat slaughtering facilities (those who have a niche and are ready to take on more risk and markets) with an opportunity to scale-up so they can sell beyond direct to consumer, to markets such as schools. Schools are not currently buying a lot of locally raised and processed meat, and with more local facilities in the state meat program they will be able provide their Oregon-raised and processed meat to schools. These sales are especially important for Oregon's ranchers' economic recovery after losing other markets due to COVID-19.

Please support HB 2785.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Kemple". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Megan Kemple, Director, Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network