



February 1, 2021

Re: Support for HB 2785 - Grant Program for Meat Processing

To Whom It May Concern:

Food Roots exists to grow a more robust and equitable food system in Tillamook County through community engagement, education, food producer support, and improved access to local food.

Our aim is to foster a strong food system in which everyone in Tillamook County will be able to eat healthy local food daily, and through which residents will better understand their role in the local food system, have the ability to grow their own food when possible, and have the resources to eat well. We believe such a food system will lead to a healthier community, a stronger economy, and increased well-being throughout our communities. Our programs include Farm to School for students in three school districts across Tillamook County and we are facilitating direct sales between food producers and schools.

We also run a local food storefront in downtown Tillamook where we connect local farmers, ranchers and fishers directly to consumers in Tillamook County through a physical retail marketplace and a new online marketplace launched in 2020, and featuring locally produced foods. Through this program we provide market access to beginning and mid-size food producers, make their products available to our community including schools and institutions, and we increase the affordability of this food for low-income shoppers through SNAP/EBT acceptance and state funded Double Up Food Bucks funds.

It has been apparent for many years that constraints in the USDA slaughter system are negatively impacting our region's livestock producers and their ability to provide these high protein foods for all our community. **We strongly support HB 2785 so that funding can help rebuild our meat processing infrastructure on the North Coast.** Meat producers currently spend entire days on the road to deliver livestock to USDA butches in the valley and also to return to pick up meat for their customers. Access to slaughter and cut and wrap facilities in our region will bring more efficiency and economic viability while helping our producers meet the demand from wholesale and retail customers on the coast.

Sincerely,

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

Lauren Sorg
Executive Director
Food Roots