

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2785

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee:

My name is Angela Andre. I am a the owner/operator of Phoenix Farm Enterprises, Inc. in Eugene.

Oregon desperately needs more meat processing capacity, which is why the legislature recently enacted the [State Meat Inspection Program](#). However, to be truly successful, the State Meat Inspection Program needs a concurrent grant fund to help expand processing capacity, especially in rural Oregon.

I am asking you to support [HB 2785](#), which would establish a \$10 million grant program to fund expansion, upgrades, and technical and other necessities, such as equipment, as laid out in the [programs in other states](#). Additional facilities boosting Oregon's processing capacity could:

- Support local, direct to consumer meat sales
- Increase regional food system resilience and rural economic development
- Support producers' ability to donate locally produced meat to food banks and other community assistance programs
- Give producers greater control over the price they receive for livestock
- Diversify processing options and reduce risk of processing bottlenecks
- Allow producers to find a local facility to slaughter and process livestock in remote locations across
- Reduce transportation time and costs for producers, and lessening carbon footprints

Oregon's already acute lack of meat processing capacity has been severely strained during Covid-19, as industrial meat processing facilities were closed by virus outbreaks and out-of-state producers sent meat to the Pacific Northwest for processing, taking away precious processing slots for Oregon farmers and ranchers. Increased demand for local meat also further taxed an already burdened system, with even seasoned producers lamenting the loss of processing slots

Having a successful State Meat Inspection program is important to me because...

Currently to be able to process my meat animals I must make appointments for a least 6 months out. Because of Covid many larger farms and ranches are now trying to direct market their products, instead of selling them to feedlots, and are jamming up small local USDA processors. And to process my chickens and ducks, at the closest ODA licensed poultry processing facility, I must drive 2 hours there and 2 hours back. This adds quite a bit of cost to process, which I must pass on to the consumer, making my locally grown, pasture raised meat less competitive in the market.

I would love to see the Prime Act passed, allowing red meat processed at ODA licensed facilities allowed to be marketed within the state. I feel that on farm processing is so much humane than transporting animals to USDA facilities. I realize that this option, only works for smaller farms and ranches, but it would free up more space in the USDA facilities.

In addition, one of the major barriers to the creation of new poultry processing facilities are the County licensing requirements, hopefully these costs could be part of what is covered by the grants. I personally set up a poultry/small animal processing facility at my farm, but the County permitting requirements made it financially unfeasible to make it an ODA licensed facility.

As we saw early in the Covid Pandemic, not having a local supply of meat puts our communities in danger of food shortages.

In a state that is capable of growing all the meat we need it is sad that we import much of the meat consumed in the state, adding to the carbon footprint, and sending many of our jobs and dollars to other states and countries.

Thank you for supporting Local Agriculture,

Angela Andre, Phoenix Farm Enterprises, Inc.

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