

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee:

My name is Stephani Scott. I am a local food consumer, enthusiast, and advocate in Bend, OR.

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 it is important to me that local farmers – our community members - can continue to exist and participate in the economy. Further, our local farmers are more likely to practice sustainable practices that are socially responsible, economically viable, and environmentally sound – if they are unable to survive then we will see more of the damage to our environment, the health of community members, and the economy caused by CAFOs. Lastly, due to Covid-19, our local meat producers' access to their regular butchers is complicated by their butchers being overwhelmed by larger farmers' orders related to larger plants shutting down or slowing down because of COVID – again, shutting out the smaller meat producer or causing them expensive work-arounds.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Thank you,  
Stephani Scott  
Bend, OR