

Submitter: Valerie Nguyen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources
Measure: SB507

Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, and members of the committee — my name is Valerie Nguyen and I'm writing on behalf of the Westfir Oakridge Local Food Hub and Oakridge Community Farmers Market, 501(c)3

Through its seasonal recurring event, 'Oakridge Community Farmers Market', the Westfir Oakridge Local Food Hub's goal is to provide a peaceful space for neighbors and regional small farms to sell their locally-produced agricultural items with an emphasis on ecological and healthy growing practices, while encouraging and supporting sustainable local food through the fellowship of community.

I'm writing today in support of SB 507, which will provide much needed improvements and upgrades to Oregon's Farm Direct Marketing Law first enacted in 2011.

SB 507, with the forthcoming amendment, will:

Include entities that assist small producers by aggregating, delivering, and assisting with the sale of FDML eligible products, into the FDML regulatory framework.

Add steam canning and freeze drying to eligible processes that can be used for the production of preserves, jams, and canned fruit and vegetables.

Improve consumer access to FDML products by allowing additional sales opportunities through consignment.

Include certain herbal tea blends, juices, and maple syrup as eligible products under OR's FDML.

I am excited to see the changes proposed in SB 507. With these changes, I'll be able to open up more opportunities for small farms and value-added microenterprises to flourish within our rural communities, increasing rural food supply, employment, and more sustainable economic benefit back to local causes.

We would also like to see a greater capacity of connection between small farms and institutions through food hub and procurement services. Instead of overextending themselves in marketing and distribution logistics beyond the field, small farmers should at least have the option to be more liberated to tend to their work managing tilth and soil if they so choose to.

Our local food systems have increased demands that we must start to address — SB 507 will help Oregon farmers and producers continue to sell safe, fresh produce directly to their consumers in the modern era.

With opportunities to increase revenue through additional safe, value-added products

like herbal tea mixes and preserves and the opportunity to expand marketing and delivery avenues, SB 507 will help both Oregon's small producers and the customers they serve.

Oregonians are demanding more local, sustainable and fresh products accessible in their communities. With the boom in farmers markets over the last decade, and the expansion of food hubs and food delivery systems, it's time to ensure Oregon's Farm Direct Marketing Law keeps pace.

The improvements in the legislation before you will help improve upon our robust local food system, expand producers' sales and income opportunities, and give everyone a clearer regulatory framework about what foods can and cannot be sold farm-direct.

Countless farmers and consumers benefit from this model and we support the continuation and modernization of this important process.

I urge your support for SB 507.

Thank you for your time and consideration.