

Submitter: Sydney Deluna

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Economic Development and Small Business

Measure: HB2909

Background: Community food system assessments and collaborative planning over the past decade have identified critical infrastructure bottlenecks needed to expand our local food supply chain. Please support HB 2909 to make strategic investments into facilities for processing, storing, and cooking, essential to support Oregon's seafood industry. Only 10 percent of seafood in Oregon Coast restaurants is locally sourced. If increased by 10 percent, \$90 million could be generated annually in our rural coastal communities.

#### Rebuilding rural industry infrastructure

My name is Sydney DeLuna. As founding member of Agricultural Connections Cooperative, a producer cooperative in Bend, OR, and a participant/coordinator for Oregon Community Food Systems Network's Food Hub working group, I am writing in support of HB2909 to support OCVA's local (sea)food initiatives. OCVA's work in food systems has been multi-faceted and innovative, and they have proven themselves as a committed partner not just for their own coastal community but to other regions across Oregon.

Our co-op recently purchased a local business and food aggregation hub called Agricultural Connections. This enterprise is operated as a for-profit sales and marketing channel for Central Oregon's local food producers including farmers, ranchers, and value-added makers. Our customer base consists of over 30 restaurant/wholesale buyers and over 150 households.

#### Regional collaboration

Over the past few years, a grass-roots working group has emerged under the direction of Lauren Gwin at OSU Small Farm Center. The OCFSN Food Hub Network now serves as a peer-to-peer learning group for over 12 highly collaborative regional hubs, procurement leads, and value chain coordinators from across the state. Conversations within this group about logistical and operational challenges faced by our rural food economies have led to an active partnership with OCVA to pilot new connections between hubs and regions.

One such connection is actively emerging. Located in Newport, OR, Yaquina Lab, is currently supporting 5 local producers and one restaurant with processing space, dry and cold storage, and co-working/office space. Yaquina Lab works with Local Ocean Seafood's Dockbox program, a pandemic response for keeping local seafood moving from dock to dish in communities across Oregon while restaurants were shut down.

House Bill 2909 will support further development of the Lab at a critical time to stabilize and grow these kinds of partnerships – funding will support development of a live seafood/mariculture system, shared use commercial kitchen to serve more rural producers, and additional cold storage capacity on site, significantly increasing the number of businesses, and marketing channels served.

Support HB2909 to keep more local (sea)food local and available  
Oregon's small-scale commercial harvesters and processors need our help. The rising costs of infrastructure are inhibitors to the growth of these businesses and HB2909 will fund investments in the seafood industry supply chain that are causing an estimated \$252 million in economic leakage. Support OCVA and help businesses keep more Oregon seafood in Oregon to support our community health, wellness, and economic future, Support HB2909.