

SB 507: FDML Improvements

Link: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Measures/Overview/SB507>

Hearing Date: Wednesday, Jan. 25

Hearing Time: 8:00 AM



Talking Points

- Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, and members of the committee: My name is Carrie Juchau and I'm writing on behalf of Daily Blessings Farm and the Josephine County Farm Collective.
- I am a small farmer operating at a poverty income level. I have farmed for 14 years, have a bachelor's degree in agricultural sciences and now grow organic strawberries, diversified vegetable crops and layer poultry for eggs. Prior to farming, I was a public educator for 14 years with 26% of my students coming to school hungry every day. Frustrated with school administration lacking initiative to improve school nutrition programs, I opted for a career change to begin feeding the community where I was raised; in southern Oregon. In 2020, I invited six farms to join me in a pilot project in an attempt to deliver our locally grown food directly to homes/workplaces when all other sales outlets had closed. Together we pooled resources to reduce costs with bulk purchases, shared refrigeration and storage space, and distribution of goods to reduce fuel costs all while maintaining the highest level of food safety and traceability back to it's source. During 2021 and 2022, and out of a need to survive the pandemic and fill the gaps within the food system, we continued to grow this collaboration through an online marketplace food hub and home delivery service. The Josephine County Farm Collective has now grown to include over 25 small businesses, local farms and ranches working together successfully. What was once a competitive marketplace forcing consumers to choose one farm over another for a CSA farm share subscription, is now an extremely successful collaborative effort to meet the needs of our community. Our demographics reflect 50% of Josephine County's residents either over 65 years of age or under 18 years of age. Much of our population lives rurally and does not have transportation to acquire locally grown food even if they receive financial assistance and when farmers markets returned to operation, so online ordering and delivery services

(during a time when gas prices skyrocketed) were critical. One major component of the farm collective is to provide educational programs for both the consumer and producer. This includes food safety, Good Agricultural Practices on-farm, post-harvest storage at home, canning and preservation safety, proper recordkeeping and more. Our continued efforts to develop this food hub and support the economic viability of local small farms is continually challenged by the restrictions of the Oregon Farm Direct Marketing Law. We continue to demonstrate that grower transparency and food safety can be maintained through our online marketplace and food hub distribution where each product is clearly identified by its grower from farm to table.

- 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 increase access to locally grown foods to community residents while concurrently helping to build a resilient and robust local food network of food producers. This helps feed our community while economically developing our small business farmers through a reliable income stream and educational training for agricultural business development. .
- 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 canned and freeze dried fruit, vegetables, dried teas, and syrup 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.