



Friends of Family Farmers ♦ PO Box 751 ♦ Junction City, OR 97448

503-581-7124 ♦ www.FriendsofFamilyFarmers.org

Chair Grayber, Vice Chairs Lewis and Tran and all members of the Committee:

My Name is Alice Morrison and I am the Organizational Director of Friends of Family Farmers. Thank you for the opportunity to support HB 2763. We are a statewide nonprofit that serves small and midsized, diversified, local market focused farmers and we have over 1,600 farmers active in our network. Every two years, we conduct surveys and focus groups to get to the root of the problems our farmers are facing and align our advocacy and programs to solving problems for the folks we serve. In 2022, our outreach showed that access to appropriate land and capital was the one of the biggest barriers to our farmers' success, second only to the impact of drought and climate change.

Our farmers find it difficult to find the right loan programs through current federal resources and traditional lending is often out of reach for farmers. Due to the inherent risk in farming and the high comparative interest rates in the private sector, our farmers struggle to find the credit resources they need if they are too small, too new, or too diversified to easily qualify for USDA Farm Service Agency loan programs.

A state public bank is a way to put rural communities, and traditionally hard to fund folks like small farmers back in the running for the capital they need to expand their businesses, find land security, and grow our rural economies. There are already examples of state bank programs in other states we can look to for guidance when creating solutions for Oregon. This is not the first time we have tried to find a solution for farmers through a State Public Bank. In 2019, we helped to introduce HB 3085 which would have combined 3 programs from the State Bank of North Dakota to create a Family Farmer Loan program administered by Business Oregon to help both new and established farmers purchase land, livestock and equipment at rates that make sense to agriculture. More information on these programs can be found here:

[North Dakota Family Farm Loan Program](#) - allows farmers and ranchers to purchase or refinance land, equipment or livestock or to restructure operating debt.

[North Dakota Beginning Farmer Real Estate Loan](#) - assists beginning farmers or ranchers with the purchase of farm real estate.

[North Dakota Beginning Farmer Chattel Loan](#) - to assist beginning farmers and ranchers with the purchase of equipment and livestock.

A similar bill (HB 3247) was also introduced in 2017. We have been circling around this issue for years and these are the types of programs that our farmers look for. We have tried to find places for the programs we admire from the Bank of North Dakota in other parts of our government, and it has not worked. The possibility of a State Public Bank as explored by the task force in this bill is a central component of making this work for the folks we want to help most. We urge you to support HB 2763 and help Oregon explore options to help small farmers through a State Public Bank task force.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alice Morrison".

Alice Morrison
Organizational Director
Friends of Family Farmers