



House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

March 20, 2023

Chair Helm, Vice-Chairs Hartman and Owens and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water:

I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 2134, the Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package (BiDRAWS) and specifically the following provision:

Mini-Grants for Resilience/Adaptation and Relief for Small-Scale Farms and Ranches:

Provides direct allocation to the Oregon Community Food Systems Network (OCFSN) to provide mini-grants for resilience/adaptation of small-scale farms and ranches to provide direct relief for drought impacts to producers. This provision builds on 2021 2nd Special Session pass through funding to OCFSN to support small-scale producers with barriers to other assistance programs.

Drought is threatening the viability of Oregon's farms and ranches. This is even more true for small farms who may not have the resources to weather these disruptions and often fall between the cracks of traditional safety nets and government aid. Many federal safety net programs for farmers and ranchers do not cover the types of crops produced in Oregon, the types of operations that need relief, or the types of losses our farmers are experiencing. As a result, federal assistance programs leave many of Oregon's farmers, ineligible for federal disaster relief. Assistance from the state is needed to help producers with losses not covered by federal programs. The Oregon Disaster Assistance Program (ODAP) was not accessible to many beginning farmers and ranchers as well as small and BIPOC producers, the same producers who may not have the resources to weather disaster-related disruptions and often fall between the cracks of traditional safety nets and government aid. This alternative mini-grant fund for small-scale farms and ranches, was extremely successful this past biennium and it is needed.

There's also a need to go beyond disaster relief to *prevent losses* by increasing drought/heat resilience. The state should simultaneously provide financial support for practices and infrastructure (such as misters, shade cloth, and fans for greenhouses) to help farmers adapt to, and become more resilient to, extreme weather events.

Please support and advance HB 2134, the Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package (BiDRAWS) with these provisions.

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