

Submitter: Anna Curtin

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and  
Water

Measure: HB3124

Chair Helm, Vice-chairs Hartman and Owens, and members of the committee:

My name is Anna Curtin and I am a farmer, farmers market employee and farmers market supporter. I conduct business and am employed in Sandy, Canby, and Portland. I appreciate the opportunity to voice support for HB 3124 and the particular importance of components 4-7 and 4-8.

Components 4-7 and 4-8 would support farmers and the community food system as we continue to experience ongoing drought, related natural disasters and our changing water availability reality. Component 4-7 creates a separate fund for small farmers to gain drought resilience through the Oregon Community Food Systems Network. The OCFSN has proven experience administering this kind of program and its members are trusted resources for new, small, and diverse farmers that do not traditionally take advantage of ODA programs. This is distinct from the ODA drought relief and resilience fund because:

The OCFSN fund prioritized farmers who identify as Black, Indigenous or people of color. It is only open to small farms with under \$300,000 of revenue.

The OCFSN funds are grants, typically more accessible to small farms than the forgivable loans in the ODAP program.

OCFSN is using a network of trusted organizations to reach farmers who do not see themselves in or have good relationships with ODA programs.

OCFSN's application process was less burdensome and involved more one on one attention from the grant administrator, so it was open to more new and first time farmers.

Component 4-8 creates resilience for our community food system sales outlets which will allow them to keep benefiting farmers and feeding communities even in the face of drought related disasters. We need to prioritize our community food systems because farmers markets are essential businesses serving Oregon's communities with safe, reliable access to nutritious food. In addition to serving as business incubators for small and new farms, farmers markets generate an estimated \$60M in sales for Oregon's small businesses. They are particularly good for rural economies. Markets and FoodHubs supports the farms that, according to a study from OSU, create more jobs per \$1M in sales, put more money directly into the local economy, and generate more economic activity for other local businesses than commodity farms.

I am personally invested in components 4-7 and 4-8 because I have experienced income loss from drought-related market closures (extreme temperatures, poor air quality due to wildfire smoke). I have also experienced adverse health effects working outside to harvest while smoke from wildfires blanket the farm. Beyond this business perspective, as a market shopper and supporter, I have been a concerned witness to fellow farm businesses who have missed market sales days, experienced crop failures, and are facing water quality issues, all due to drought-related causes. It is disheartening to see Oregonians who work so hard to feed their communities faced with these setbacks.

This is a good investment to prioritize community food systems and make Oregon more resilient. Please support HB 3124 and prioritize components 4-7 and 4-8.

With appreciation,

Anna Curtin  
Sandy, Oregon