

Submitter: Erin Maidlow  
On Behalf Of: Farmers and Ranchers in Douglas County  
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2164

Dear Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens and members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Wildfire:

My name is Erin Maidlow and I am the Executive Director of Umpqua Valley Farm to School, where we provide technical assistance to producers in Douglas County. This can be in the form of helping find available meat processors, connecting co-packers, and maximizing capacity and sustainability of small farmers and ranchers. I am writing today to support HB 2164 and tell you how crucial it is that we take the final steps to make the State Meat Inspection program successful. It is crucial that Oregon have the infrastructure to enable our hardworking farmers and ranchers to bring their livestock to market. The state currently has too few USDA inspected facilities to meet demand and small farms are often given 12 month wait times for appointments to get their animals processed. The State Meat Inspection Program can alleviate this bottleneck and allow more farms to thrive here, reduce their travel and processing costs, and allow small farms to meet the growing demand for local pasture raised meat.

This impacts our community because we have hundreds of farmers and ranchers who drive hundreds of miles to the nearest processing facility with available slots for meat processing. While Douglas County does have a USDA inspected facility, it is backed up for over a year to get animals in. This leads to our producers traveling hundreds of miles, often to just outside of Portland to have animals processed. This can be very difficult for producers who need to take a full day or more just to get their livestock to the producer, then another full day or more to pick it up once processed. The lack of USDA inspected facilities in Oregon has led to frustration in beginning ranchers who are unable to get slots for their livestock in a timely manner which is critical in meat processing and ranching. Not only do we need to expand the capacity of existing facilities to meet the needs of our communities, we need additional facilities to cover areas of need and allow for expanded meat processing as a whole. Livestock production should not be limited to the few who have dedicated processing slots at the limited number of facilities in existence. By supporting this bill and providing funding for new USDA processing facilities, you will allow beginning ranchers and livestock producers to continue the legacy of producing high quality meats for Oregonians and beyond.

The state has already devoted so many resources and staff hours to the

establishment of the State Meat Inspection Program and qualifying facilities. Do not let the program fail to meet its promises because of a lack of inspector capacity. Please support HB 2164 and fulfill the promises our state has made to its local livestock producers.

Thank you,

Erin Maidlow

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