

*For the record, my name is Allison Murphy. I am here today to ask you to support the state meat inspection program and pass HB 2164. The state has invested a lot into this program and we cannot let the department go without crucial staff to put those resources to work.*

*My family and I have a small farm called Steady Home Farm in Deschutes County, between Tumalo and Sisters. We seasonally raise a variety of proteins, but hogs are the bread and lard of our offerings.*

*Our farm raises heritage hogs on pasture, but we solely offer custom-exempt processing because of the logistics required if we wanted to bring our hogs to market and sell individual cuts. We love offering the bulk option of custom exempt to our community, but it limits who can access our pork because it requires specific conditions of our customers: they must be rooted in their homes enough to justify having a deep freezer, meaning folks who are renters are less likely to be able to commit to a whole or half hog and a deep freezer. If we were able to send a few hogs a year to a local butcher for retail sales, our pork market would open up and we could sell individual cuts to local folks who want to support without committing to a bulk share.*

*As we witness the consolidation of much of our food and agriculture industries in the US, it is imperative that Oregonians consider every aspect of growing local food and getting it to market, and this includes thinking about the small processors and the communities they're trying to sell to.*

*Oregon farms raise some of the best pastured, heritage pork available and I love being part of a system that takes care of our farmland and feeds our community. But we need to have the infrastructure to bring our meat to market. Please pass HB 2164 and give the department the staff they need to be successful so that we can further support the local food economy of Oregon.*