

Submitter: Brenda Smola-Foti
On Behalf Of: TheGround and SourceFarms
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2164

I'm Brenda Smola-Foti, and my husband and I own and operate The Ground, a collection of businesses connecting food, farming, and hospitality in Yamhill County. One of our businesses, Source Farms, is a marketplace for high-quality, locally raised meats, where we work with a network of dedicated farmers and ranchers—including our own family farm. Our work is rooted in regenerative agriculture, sustainability, and strengthening Oregon's local food system.

Because of this, we know firsthand how critical meat processing capacity is for small and mid-sized farms. The good work that has already been done by expanding the scope of state-licensed processing—bridges a crucial gap between ODA-licensed facilities and USDA inspection.

Now, we need to build on this excellent progress— by ensuring proper funding for the meat inspectors who make this system work. Without enough inspectors, processing bottlenecks will continue and the potential of this new scope is mitigated.

Currently the processing capacity creates pain points for our business that include: - extended travel time, -long scheduling times.. up to a year and -higher price of services.

—Our ability to support our farm and others to meet increasing consumer demand depends directly on processing availability.

Processing bottlenecks don't just affect established farms like ours—they prevent new farmers from entering the market. Many aspiring ranchers & farmers hesitate to start because of this. Expanding access would open doors for more farms, increase food security and the livestock farming future of Oregon.

Our state is making great strides in strengthening and creating sovereignty in our local food system—now we must follow through. By funding inspector services, we can ensure fair access to processing for all producers, helping FARMS grow, meeting consumer demand, and strengthening our rural communities.

Let's build on this momentum and make sure this program delivers on its promise.

I urge you to support this bill HB2164. Thank you!