

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

My name is Virginia Olea and I am a small farmer from Madras. 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 personally impacts me because: We feed 50 families and can only provide meat to these families two times per year, because of the lack of USDA certified facilities. Two years ago we had booked out every three months with Oregon Beef Company when they decided to no longer process meat from small farms, because they could not find workers. We had to take the hogs we had already had to outside of Eugene at Mohawk a 3 hour trip one way for us. This also add stress for hogs.

Our customers prefer to buy meat from us because we raise them humanly 3 at a time. They eat vegetables from our farm and have space to roam. We would go back to raising hogs every quarter if we had access to another certified processor close to home.

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,

Virginia Olea

Four Acre Farm Madras

4508 SW Eureka Lane

Madras OR 97741

