

Submitter: Geoff Scott

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2164

Co-Chairs Helam and Owens, Vice Chair Finger McDonald and members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Geoff Scott and I am the Owner and Operator of Marion Acres, a small livestock farm in Hillsboro, and Helvetia Poultry Processing, a poultry slaughter house. 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, including two rounds of capacity expansion grants, and we cannot let the department go without crucial staff to put those resources to work. As a tax payer, I would like to see the investment made in capacity be fully realized by funding inspectors.

As a farmer, I currently use three different slaughter houses for my large animals, both beef and pork. Scheduling and plant capacity require me to make appointments over a year in advance, often prior to actually having the animals that will eventually go to slaughter. I consider myself fortunate in that the furthest I have to drive is an hour one way. Given the constraints on scheduling and plant capacity, I am limited in the number of animals I can raise and harvest. This limits the cuts of meat I can put in my small retail space here on the farm, and it limits access to that high quality meat by the community here that I serve.

As a poultry slaughter house operator, I want to briefly mention that poultry was excluded from all the efforts around increasing meat processing capacity, which is unfortunate. We have little to no capacity left, and we are among just a handful of ODA licensed slaughter houses in Oregon. I, along with the owners of the other poultry slaughterhouses in Oregon, would have benefited greatly from being included in the recent efforts around the State Meat Inspection program, and could have eased some of the strain of constantly processing at, or above, our capacity.

I believe that Oregon raises some of the best beef, pork, lamb, chicken and turkey 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony.