

Submitter: Natalia Mikkola

On Behalf Of:

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 Natalia Mikkola and I am a community member from Salem. 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 I buy local farm raised meat and my fiance farms Charolais cattle in Rainier, Oregon. I have many family members and friends who also exclusively purchase local raised meat from friends and farmers. These people are vital to our local food systems and support our food network in times of national distress and food chain logistical interruptions due to weather, government, or other marketing issues. Passing this bill could help significantly reduce cost and wait times to get our meat processed and to fresh markets making food more available to our communities quicker and maybe at a better price hopefully. We could possibly raise more cattle locally if we knew that we could it processed and to our markets quicker. People want fresh meat that they know where it came from and how it was treated. This in turn could allow our family and friends and fellow ranchers to make a more reliable income for our households instead of just covering our costs to fed our own families.

I would love to have better access to quality raised organic pasture fed meat in our beautiful Willamette Valley. We have everything we need to provide for our communities here. Lets eliminate these unnecessary road blocks that prevent us from feeding more people. No one wants 50 ingredient, foreign, grain filled, processed alternatives with lord knows what in them when you can have healthy, organic, clean meat raised by your friends and neighbor farmers. Keep your money local and your food available no matter what is going on in the world or nationwide.

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,
Natalia Mikkola
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