



Testimony in Support of HB 2164 to the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources and Water

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Shimanek Bridge Farm, Scio

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Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens and Members of the Committee,

We are writing today to urge your support for HB 2164 and to fully fund the staffing levels proposed to make Oregon's State Meat Inspection Program a success in meeting the needs of farmers and ranchers across Oregon.

We are ranchers raising grassfed beef and goat, as well as pasture raised pork, on nearly 70 acres in the Scio area. In a typical year we will process between 10-20 beef, 25-50 goats and 10-20 pigs. We sell our products through the Salem Saturday Market, to restaurants and food carts, and through a farm stand on our property. Because of this, we require USDA inspection for our animals at time of slaughter. We have been raising animals for market since 2012 and every year have had challenges in securing butcher dates at the very limited number of USDA inspected slaughter houses in our region. In fact, the number of animals we have processed in the past few years is usually limited by how many butcher dates we can secure in a timely fashion. We have to request butcher dates up to one year in advance, and hope the dates we receive fall within a month of what we requested to avoid extra feeding costs or not having animals ready in time.

We are not alone, as many farmers and ranchers in Oregon who sell directly to end users as opposed to an auction yard face similar challenges. Oregon's State Meat Inspection Program has the ability to alleviate the bottlenecks in USDA processing in Oregon, helping more farmers and ranchers get their products more efficiently to consumers in Oregon.

We have observed a steadily growing market in Oregon for locally raised meat from smaller, mid-sized independent producers in recent years, and continued investment in fully staffing and funding Oregon's State Meat Inspection Program can help local producers meet that demand, provide more local food security when pandemics or other supply chain disruptions occur, and spur local economic development in small towns across the state.

Again, we urge your support for HB 2164 to provide for full staffing levels for Oregon's State Meat Inspection Program. Thank you for your consideration.

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