

Submitter: Whitney Jacques

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2979

My name is Whitney Jacques and I am a farmer and rancher from Portland. I am writing today to support HB 2979 and tell you how crucial it is that we continue our investment in the local food system by supporting small farms and ranches and the outlets that they depend on, especially farmers markets and food hubs. These community institutions not only bring economic opportunity into rural Oregon, they connect urban and rural areas through agricultural marketplaces, provide access to local food, and tap into nutrition assistance programs that spread these fresh Oregon grown fruits, vegetables, and meats to people who might not otherwise be able to get them. We need to make sure that these vital small businesses can withstand the natural disasters, worsening storms, and unpredictable weather that has been increasing in recent years.

This personally impacts me because unpredictable weather caused by climate change negatively impacts my farm and animals and is increasingly problematic as the seasons roll on. I have experienced fatalities of my livestock and loss of produce due to severe hot weather. Wildfires caused by drought have caused closures of my markets, leaving me with unsold produce that spoiled. Grants help to mitigate these losses by helping us to prepare for the heat and drought, enabling farmers and ranchers like myself to purchase shade equipment to provide shelter and shade to livestock, water catchment systems, and drought-tolerant seed as an example. With rising temperatures predicted for our future indefinitely, we must have resources to be able to continue to provide food for people.

It is time for Oregon to renew its commitment to our small farms and local food system. They keep our communities fed and insulated from the fluctuations of the centralized food supply chain. They are a vital part of our collective wellbeing, environmental stewardship, and the future of food. Please support HB 2979.

Thank you,

Whitney Jacques
Verdant Hare
Portland, OR