

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

My name is Destin Brown, and I am the Executive Director for The Hillsboro Farmers' Markets from Hillsboro. I am writing to strongly support **HB 2979**, and urge continued investment in Oregon's **farmers markets**, which serve as critical infrastructure for local economies, small farms, and food access programs.

Farmers markets are experiencing extreme weather. Heat waves, wildfires, droughts, and storms disrupt operations and threaten vendors. We need this funding to respond to these challenges and ensure markets remain open, accessible, and sustainable.

The **Farmers Market Climate Resilience Grant Fund** and **SNAP support grants** have been lifelines, helping markets upgrade infrastructure, implement cooling and smoke mitigation strategies, and expand SNAP/Double Up Food Bucks programs. But demand **far exceeds available funding**—grant requests would have required more than double the resources OFMA has to distribute. Without renewed investment, farmers markets will struggle to continue serving their communities.

These programs impact me personally because:

- Our markets are expanding and we are seeing that we not only help to fill the needs of the community for food access, but the needs of the farmers as a space to market their goods. As more and more farmland is gobbled up by towns and technology buildings in our area we are finding that farmers are being forced to move to areas which are not as favorable to marketing their goods. Farmers markets are an integral part of many small farms' business due to their urban location and direct market access.
- SNAP/DUFB are a large part of helping to support the farms and related businesses. We pay out over \$30,000 in matching funds annually which means that there is over \$60,000 in EBT/SNAP money changing hands at our market alone. This is important for supporting not only our vendors, but our local population which may be facing food insecurity.
- Administering the SNAP/DUFB programs present staffing challenges not only on the day of the market, but the backend reporting. We would not be able to fund the staffing challenges without the assistance from the FMF Growth Grant. This directly affects our ability to continue our food access programming and support our community.
- As the climate and world changes we are seeing more and more instances of environmental challenges presented, not only to the farmers, but the markets as well. The FMF Climate Resilience Grant has helped us prepare for those challenges by allowing the market to purchase items to mitigate the heat at a market as well as prepare our market to help cover costs for farm vendors if a market is canceled at the last minute. We understand that the safety of our constituents and staff is a top priority, but our vendors are also a priority. We must be able to continue to serve our community and provide spaces for food access and programs to enrich the lives of the people we touch.

OFMA and FMF can leverage state funds to **match federal funding**, strengthening our farmers markets and local food systems. We cannot afford to fall behind. **Please support HB 2979 to keep our markets strong, our farmers supported, and our communities fed.**

Thank you,
Destin Brown

Executive Director

Hillsboro Farmers Markets

manager@hillsboromarkets.org

503-844-6685