



NONI - Nonprofit

*NONI National Organization OF Non-Invasive
Practices, PNW Branch*

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

My name is Azzhaley Fenimore Reynolds, my market manager Stacia Roberts and I run the Bonanza Farmers Market in Rural Bonanza, Oregon. Our small town has a meager population of 411 individuals. While we may not be the majority, the majority of our population is relying on these SNAP and EBT grants. We are 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.

Without these programs our small community has no access to fresh produce, or goods other than the small maybe 1500 sqft shop in town. We are 45 minutes from the nearest big box store. Not only do we rely on this market for sustenance, but for economic growth as well!

Farmers markets in many areas are experiencing extreme weather. Heat waves, wildfires, droughts, and storms which disrupt operations and threaten vendors. We need this funding to respond to these challenges and ensure markets like our own 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.

However 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. Thus leading to a negative severe impact on struggling communities like our own.

These programs impact us personally because 90% of our families that attend and support our market need these programs. Families have starved in our community because there are no transportation services into town. There is no police force, medical, or even fire that can help everyone. Most individuals use SSI or SSDI and can't even afford the gas to get to and from Klamath Falls, our nearest large town. Even in the Winter and off season our local bakers, and producers have now been able to help one another stay safe, and build a true community! I Azzhaley, preferred name Willow, may have planted the Seed that is the Bonanza Farmers Market, but I never ever imagined to see how much it has grown! I never imagined to see small families start their own independent businesses, or parents be able to afford what their kids need. Who previously could not.

Without my market manager Stacia and a long time local this market wouldn't have been able to continue. She has sacrificed so much to keep it going, and when I fell due to the hardships of our Rural area she alone helped bring myself, and this market back to life! Together we have seen families struggling now thrive. We have watched young entrepreneurs be created, and have seen a community come together in desperate times. We had the Golden Fire a couple of years ago and that was horrible. People from the market came together and we helped those who lost everything. The little funding we have received has literally been our lifeline due to the minute economy that is Klamath County.

Please help our community by supporting HB 2979 give hope to those that otherwise wouldn't even get out of bed. We may be outside of the Urban Growth Boundaries, but that doesn't mean we don't need these funds. We actually need them the most! Please help us continue to support those who are Underserved, and otherwise incapable of thriving on their own. 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.

We look forward to the outcome, and seeing our communities continue to thrive. Not survive.

Best regards,

Azzhaley Fenimore Reynolds

A.k.a Willow

NONI Nonprofit Owner/BFM Founder

Stacia Roberts

&

BFM Market Manager