

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

My name is Alisa Ocean, and I am a farmers market manager from Cave Junction. 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.

The market that I manage is located in Southern Oregon in an area prone to wildfire smoke and extreme heat. Last year we had to close our market when temperatures soared to 113 degrees. Many times in past years we have closed the market due to an unhealthy level of smoke. An OFMA Climate Resilience Grant has helped our market purchase mister hoses to keep our market cooler in the summer heat. We keep our booth fees to Farmers low because we live in a rurally isolated and impoverished part of the state and the OFMA grant helps us to keep our market open by retaining valuable staff. When days are too hot to be outdoors or unhealthy with smoke levels, the OFMA grant gives us the ability to rent an indoor location instead of cancelling the market altogether.

Cave Junction experiences a high level of food insecurity. By offering SNAP and DUFEB at our market, we increase the health of our community by making healthy local produce more affordable to low income people and families. Over and over I hear from customers how they are struggling to keep groceries in their house and what a profound impact the DUFEB program has in supporting them. This program is also a huge asset to our small local farmers who struggle to compete with big box stores and large farming operations.

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,

Alisa Ocean

Cave Junction Farmers Market

P.O. Box 2622 Cave Junction OR, 97523
