

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

My name is Jessamyn Van Den Elzen, and I am a community member from Eugene. 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.

Food access and local farming are more important than ever with many of Trump's policies like tariffs and deportation affecting our food supply chains. Farmers markets are also experiencing more and more 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.

OFMA and FM 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,
Jessamyn Van Den Elzen