

Submitter: Julia Tomes

On Behalf Of:

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

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2979

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

My name is Julia Tomes and I am a People's Farmers' Market community member from Portland, OR. 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.

Though I am not a direct beneficiary of SNAP, everything in life is connected and the access to farmers markets that it, and the other programs this bill funds, provides to people in my community is vital. Without access to healthy and fresh local food, our community suffers, from the farmer who produces the food and relies on the grants, to the tax payer who pays for the public health crises we are in due to people living in food deserts. Farmers markets provide connection, community, and access to vitally healthy and fresh food. Without continuing the funding for the bill, these cornerstones of support and sustenance will lead to important systems falling apart in communities all over Oregon. 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. Demand already far exceeds available funding. Without renewed investment, farmers markets will struggle to continue serving their communities.

People's Food Co-op is unique in hosting a weekly farmers' market which is year-round. I shop at the farmers' market almost weekly, walking there with my elderly neighbor. If you go to the market you will find people of all ages and backgrounds gathering to buy groceries, eating food from local vendors, listening to music, and learning about growing food in their own yards, or just sitting and visiting. All of these connections are made possible by the funding that this bill provides and reverberates throughout the neighborhood, city, and our state. As John Donne said a long time ago, "No man is an island...", and markets aren't just a place to shop.

OFMA and Farmers Market Fund 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,  
Julia Tomes  
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