

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

My name is Willa Bauman, and I am a farmers market manager from Sisters, Oregon. 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 farmers market in Sisters has experienced closures due to heat/smoke and loss of sales through lower customer attendance during prolonged periods of heat/smoke. Last summer, the first major wildfires in our region began in early July, a full month before we normally expect smoky days, and just one month after our market opened for the season. This was very detrimental to the local farmers and food producers who rely on our market, farmers who are already struggling to grow food in the high desert with increasing water shortages, longer smoke and heat, and rising costs of goods and housing. Our farmers market was lucky to be a recipient of OFMA's Climate Resilience Grant in 2024: the funds provided for practical support for vendors in extreme heat and smoke (misterters, cooling stations, indoor space) and supplemental support for navigating lower customer attendance during the peak summer selling season. These funds are crucial to ensuring that farmers markets can keep supporting both local farmers and community food access while navigating the effects of climate change.

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,

Willa Bauman

Sisters Farmers Market

PO Box 1812, Sisters, OR 97759