

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

My name is Nora McGowan, and I am a People's Farmers' Market community member from Portland. 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.

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 farmer markets remain the most affordable and accessible means of getting fresh local produce for me. The quality of grocery stores in my neighbourhood pales in comparison in both price and quality compared to markets meaning I normally have to travel outside of Portland for groceries that are quality and affordable. When markets are open this isn't the case, that food source is often right in my neighborhood.

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.