

Submitter: Elizabeth Stepp
On Behalf Of: myself
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, Natural Resources, and Water,

My name is Elizabeth Stepp, and I am a People's Farmers' Market community member from Portland. I'm writing to strongly support HB 2979, and urge continued investment in Oregon's farmers markets, which serve as critical infrastructure for local economies, local communities, small farms, and food access programs. The Farmers Market Climate Resilience Grant Fund and SNAP support grants have been increasingly critical 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 and support the local economy networks. These programs impact me personally because:

- I support my community members who depend upon SNAP/DUFB to get fresh, healthy foods, which grows healthy people.
- In this time of large chain supermarkets dominating, it's increasingly important to keep local farmers and the programs that support both farmers, families and local businesses alive as an option.
- A good diet depends on fresh and diverse foods. The farmers market is an excellent example of where anyone can find seasonally fresh food products from local producers. It also serves as a vital community gathering and networking place, of which our society now has a dearth of such places, to the detriment of our community's mental and physical wellbeing.

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,
Elizabeth Stepp
in support of PEOPLE'S FARMERS' MARKET
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