

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

My name is Alexis Molinari, and I am the Director of Lane County Farmers Market in 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.

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.

At Lane County Farmers Market, we have seen firsthand the powerful impact these funds have on our ability to support local farmers, improve our infrastructure, and expand our food equity programs. The supplemental funding we received has been crucial in helping us meet the needs of our community, particularly those who rely on our EBT/DUFB programs.

These efforts have significantly improved the experience for our customers, enhanced our market's visibility, and allowed us to serve our community more effectively. However, the challenges of increasing impact from extreme weather and a growing number of EBT users require ongoing investment to maintain and expand these programs.

I strongly urge you to support HB 2979 in order to continue funding these critical programs. The growth and success of Lane County Farmers Market, and farmers markets across Oregon, depends on continued investment in our infrastructure, outreach efforts, and the ability to provide equitable access to healthy, local food.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of farmers markets and the communities they serve.

Thank you,
Alexis Molinari
Market Director, Lane County Farmers Market
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