

HB 2979

Morgan Schanski | Written Testimony

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

My name is Morgan Schanski, and am a community member and supporter of the Montavilla Farmers Market in Portland. I am writing to support **HB 2979** and urge continued investment in Oregon's farmers markets.

The **Farmers Market Climate Resilience Grant Fund** and **SNAP support grants** have been critical for markets, helping them **expand food access, upgrade infrastructure, and respond to extreme weather challenges**. However, demand for these funds far exceeds availability. Without renewed investment, farmers markets will struggle to continue serving their communities, especially as climate change and economic pressures increase.

I have personally witnessed the impact of these programs:

- **Extreme Weather Closures & Market Stability:** As extreme weather events become more frequent, market managers face difficult decisions about whether to remain open, impacting both vendor income and community access to fresh food. The stress of last-minute weather-related closures—coordinating with vendors, ensuring safety, and communicating changes—has only increased. When a market is forced to close, **farmers lose a critical day of sales, and SNAP/Double Up Food Bucks shoppers lose access to fresh, local food**. More funding would help markets invest in solutions to mitigate these challenges, such as cooling stations and weather-resistant infrastructure.
- **Supporting Small Farms & Sustainable Agriculture:** I shop at farmers markets because I know the food is of the best quality, and is grown using highly sustainable practices that often go unrecognized. Over the years, I've gotten to know many of the farmers and vendors, and it is striking how much effort they put into **stewarding the land, maintaining soil health, and reducing environmental impact**—often without formal recognition or financial incentives. These grants provide essential support to markets and, in turn, the small farms that rely on them.
- **The Vital Role of SNAP & DUFB:** The SNAP/Double Up Food Bucks program is a cornerstone of food access at farmers markets, ensuring that fresh, locally grown food remains available to more Oregonians. Many shoppers at Montavilla Farmers Market rely on SNAP/DUFB to stretch their grocery budgets while accessing high-quality, nutritious food. Funding through HB 2979 would allow markets to continue expanding these programs, ensuring that families who depend on SNAP benefits can afford fresh produce while also supporting local farmers and strengthening Oregon's food economy.

By investing in HB 2979, Oregon can **leverage state funds to match federal funding**, strengthening our farmers markets and local food systems. These programs sustain local farms, increase food security, and keep our markets resilient in the face of climate change. Investing in farmers markets isn't just about food—it strengthens local economies, spurs entrepreneurial innovation, improves community health, supports sustainable agriculture, and reduces environmental impact.

Please support **HB 2979** to keep our markets strong, our farmers supported, and our communities fed.

**Thank you for your time and consideration.**

Morgan Schanski

Former Montavilla Farmer's Market Board President (2024)

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