



Upper Willamette Community
Development Corporation
PO Box 677
Oakridge, Oregon 97463

February 4, 2025

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

My Name is Bev McCulley, I am the chair of the board that operates the Oakridge Food Box and a community member from Oakridge-Westfir. 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.

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 available to distribute. Without renewed investment, farmers markets will struggle to continue serving their communities.

These programs impact the Oakridge-Westfir communities in the following ways:

- Run the SNAP and Double Up Food Bucks programs at the weekly farmer's market.
- Take most of the leftover produce after the market, buy it at a fair-to-farmer price and donate it to the Oakridge Food Box. A tremendous donation of over 3,000 pounds of fresh, organic produce last year.
- Buy air purifiers to run the market indoors on smokey days.
- Provide vendors with canopies and canopy weights to borrow.
- Reward volunteers that support market setup/breakdown with "gratitude tokens" and support backbone organizers with humble wages.
- Maintain very low/pay if you can booth fees, with no fees during challenging weather.
- Pilot an exciting online ordering program this winter and increase winter product availability.
- Have \$2,000 in microgrants to support Oakridge and Westfir local growers this year to be more climate resilient.

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' support and our communities fed and healthy.

Thank you,

Bev McCulley
Upper Willamette Community Development Corporation Board Chair (Oakridge Food Box)
PO Box 677
Oakridge, OR 97463

