

House Interim Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Co-Chairs Helm and Owens, Vice-Chair Finger McDonald, and Members of the Committee:

We are providing the following testimony in support of HB 2979, which includes funding for the Farmer and Farmer and Rancher Disaster Resilience Grants. The following 27 testimonials, demonstrating the need and impact of the funding, were provided by Farmer and Rancher Disaster Resilience Grantees, in their Grant Applications or Grant Reports.

Jesse Swanson, with their ranch in Baker City, wrote: "In August, there were numerous fires in our immediate area. A primary intent of this grant request was to have a portable corral to use for transporting cattle to safer areas during fires. We also offered this corral system to other ranchers who may have had a need to move their stock during a fire situation. In August, the Town Gulch Fire came very close to our home and where some of our cattle were pastured. Fortunately, our stock did not have to be moved, but the corral system was set up and ready to be used! This piece of equipment will greatly benefit our family and our ranching operations for many years. We are fortunate to have been awarded this grant by the Oregon Community Food System Network (OCFSN)."

Jill Myatt, with Feather Goat Farm in Baker City, wrote: "The improvements we made with this funding was critical to the success of our 2024 chicken production. In Baker County, July was the hottest month ever recorded and the most days above 100 degrees in a year. If we would not have received this grant and were still using our old mobile coops and waterers, we would have experienced major death loss and reduced weight gains due to the extreme temperatures."

Abby Bradbury, with Abby's Greens LLC in Langlois, wrote: "As a single parent relying on a farm income, I am extremely grateful to receive this grant and purchase a piece of equipment that would normally be beyond my budget. I bought a flail mower to expand my cover cropping system, with the long-term goal of nurturing healthy soil that is more resilient to droughts and floods that accompany climate change. Thank you to the Oregon Legislature for funding this important program that encourages tangible adaptations to changing conditions in agriculture."

Eric Pineda, with Cascade Country Farm in Lebanon, wrote: "So many of us agriculturists have seen first hand the impacts on our crops and livestock from extremes in our weather. This grant helped our small family farm provide a safe and healthy environment from weather extremes for our animals."

Jenny Beverage, with 5B Cattle Company in Cove, wrote: *"This grant allowed us to move forward with an NRCS project we have been working on for almost 4 years. There were two portions of our EQUIP NRCS project that we were working on and were faced with the possibility of only being able to complete one of them due to funding. This grant allowed us to complete both projects and include some additional water sources to upper pastures on our ranch that would have not been able to be included due to lack of funds. ... We now have year round water sources on every pasture on our ranch."*

Zoe Bradbury DeSurra, with Groundswell Farm in Langlois, wrote: *"We are facing a water crisis on our family farm, one which threatens its continued existence in the face of climate change. ... Farming has never been easy, but climate change is making it exponentially harder every year. These grant funds offer small, under-resourced farms like ours a critical opportunity to make strategic investments so we can adapt towards greater resiliency."*

David Barron, with Cross Eyed Cricket Farms in Blodgett, wrote: *"At Cross Eyed Cricket Farms, the disaster resilience funding has been transformative in safeguarding our farm and community. Thanks to this support, we purchased a stock trailer and installed fencing to implement rotational grazing practices, significantly enhancing our ability to prevent and respond to wildfires. ... We are deeply grateful for this investment in our farm's future, as it allows us to remain resilient in the face of challenges and continue providing for the families and communities we serve."*

Eliza Mason, with Lilliputopia in Monroe, wrote: *"We are so grateful for the additional water security these tanks give us. Due to climate change, water will become increasingly more valuable and scarce as we experience more drought and heat waves. This grant allowed us to move forward with this much needed project to expand our rainwater catchment and to ensure the future of our food crops."*

Kathy Bridges, with Santiam Valley Ranch in Turner, wrote: *"To me, this is the first effort by the State of Oregon to assist me in my ranching lifestyle. While Oregon wants to champion local/regional food production, it is very hard for historically underserved and small operators to achieve even the simplest efforts. I am a single, widowed woman who has farmed for 44 years. Farmers pick up the pieces and carry on without anyone knowing or recognizing how significant challenges can be on our lives and farming/ranching production. This program set me off on a new course, allowing me to finally achieve some of my long-term goals of using my own organic fertilizer and to finally to be able to implement rotational grazing. I feel more empowered and resilient and thus the farm is more empowered and resilient--basically because Oregon recognized me and believed in me. I hope this program can be continued, and perhaps expanded, to assist other small farm/ranch operations."*

Bogdan Caceu, with La Creole Orchards in Salem, wrote: *"Having been confronted with a severe lack of water at La Creole Orchards for 15 years, we appreciate a grant program that focuses on resilience in the face of climate disasters. We worked hard to maintain healthy soils that hold moisture longer and to conserve precious water by using the most efficient drip irrigation. ... Thanks to the Disaster Resilience Grant Program, we could afford additional water storage, more than tripling our water storage capacity to over 100,000 gallons."*

James Bryant, with Bryant Family Farm in Albany, wrote: *"This grant had a major impact on our farm. We are a small blueberry farm & there is no way that we could have afforded this amount of money at this time. Due to this funding we were able to update our well before it became an emergency. We are truly grateful for this opportunity."*

Kwame Bey, with Moorish Roots in Portland, wrote: *"This funding has not only bolstered our disaster resilience but also set us on a path toward more sustainable and efficient farming practices. We deeply appreciate this support and look forward to reaping the long-term benefits as our farm continues to grow and thrive. Thank you for your invaluable assistance in helping us build a more resilient and productive farm."*

Linda Anspach, with DD Ranch in Terrebonne, wrote: *"In the high desert, we are completely dependent on irrigation to produce hay and forage for livestock as well as other food crops. This adds an incredible amount of cost to production - cost of water, cost of electricity, cost of equipment and cost of labor in order to move water – seven days a week. As drought conditions deepen, we produce less product for more cost. On-farm efficiency is pivotal to our success. ... Upgrading these systems is very costly but the end result of decreased water usage, higher yield, increased soil health, decreased labor all contribute to future success of farmers and ranchers and our ability to continue to provide food to our community."*

Beth Portesi, with Lazy Acres Farm in Grants Pass, wrote: *"During times of drought, when the very essence of life—water—is scarce, our farm's ability to irrigate our crops becomes paramount. The rainwater catchment system, equipped with solar-powered pumps, not only guarantees a consistent water source but also enables us to continue providing food for our community when it's needed most. ... This investment doesn't just secure our farm's future; it strengthens our commitment to providing for the community when it's needed most."*

Sarah King, with Godspeed Hollow in Newberg, wrote: *"These funds supported and brought to life a project that would have otherwise taken decades to piece together. We now have an incredible system to manage ...water storage to aid in moments when there is a crisis ... Without the grant to support us we would have had a really difficult time prioritizing this work."*

Katie Swanson, with Sweet Union Farm in Klamath Falls, wrote: *"OCFSN has provided an accessible funding source for my small, rural vegetable farm that I would not otherwise be able to tap into. Farming in a drought-prone area with extreme heat and smoke means that I have to be intentional in adapting my farming practices to continue growing food for my community. ... These investments are vital to improve the resilience on my farm for many years to come and are only possible through supportive programs like this one."*

Eric Larsen, with Larsen Farm and Orchard in Albany, wrote: *"The orchard is significantly more resilient to drought and even to grass fire. ... This grant has significantly increased my farm's ability to expand and sustain operations. The grant provided the ability to store and distribute water for my orchard, allowing me the ability to increase the number of trees I planted. This grant will speed up operations long term and make use of critical resources that would otherwise go to waste."*

Emily Cooper, with Full Cellar Farm in Boring, wrote: *"this grant.. helped our farm better prepare for climate related emergencies like extreme heat and power outages. We appreciate that both short term and long term solutions were awarded, from shading our greenhouse and purchasing a generator for our irrigation well, to improving cover cropping for our soil and updating our irrigation pump to make it more energy efficient for the next 30 years or more."*

Lisa Shaddox, with Hollyhock Hollow in Bend, wrote: *"Having access to funding like this is not only a game changer for some folks, it's a life changer. I am so honored to be able to share in this amazing program and to now be able to afford to purchase a specialty tool for my farm that would have otherwise been out of my reach. Trying to navigate all the new environmental impacts to my farm can feel overwhelming at times, but having such a resource available to farmers certainly eases my mind about the future."*

Kristin Oldham, with Madrona Family Farm in Grants Pass, wrote: *"These projects will immediately improve our productivity and security in the face of high heat & wind events, wildfire, power outages (which currently mean water outages), and a long irrigation season. ... Food grows where water flows, and we are grateful for the support of the OCFSN grant in upgrading our farm water system."*

Carrie Swanson, with Town Gulch L&L in Richland, wrote: *"This year was particularly stressful with wildland fires and dry conditions which shortened some grazing time on our leased and owned ground. ... This grant opportunity is the first time we've been able to acquire panels/trailer that we would not have been able to purchase. It is a relief to have quality panels and a well-built trailer to assist us!"*

Christina Bentrup, with Farm on 42nd in Springfield, wrote: *"This funding allowed my farm to transition to systems built for improved water use efficiency and reduced energy costs. Without it my farm would have continued to use outdated and oversized equipment for lack of the capital to make infrastructure improvements. Thank you for supporting Oregon's small farmers who care about protecting our natural resources and growing our food supply together."*

Katherine Duckett, with the Farm Up Lost Creek in Dexter, wrote: *"This funding was instrumental in establishing a new nut orchard that will be part of the local food system. The solar powered drip irrigation system is excellent and our tour through OSU on October 3rd will help many others see it in action and hopefully adopted by other farmers in similar situations."*

Janine Lidell, with Future Farm and Flowers in Saint Helens, wrote: *"This funding has made an immeasurable difference by allowing us the resources to develop on-farm composting practices for improving the soil health and therefore the drought resilience of the land we farm."*

Jessica Bass, with Lazy Mule Farm in Enterprise, wrote: *"Purchasing a handful of tools and completely changing the scope of how water moves across the land will have profound and lasting effects. Improving water efficiency across the farm will ensure we are using water more responsibly and drastically reduce labor needed to irrigate. ... These improvements stand to benefit our bottom line, but most importantly our soil. Thriving soil biology and access to abundant clean water are the keys to farm resilience."*

Melissa Garcia Parry, with Howl and Whistle Flower Farm in Winston, wrote: *"Thank you for the grant! Summers are usually frustrating and stressful for me as a grower. This year I am seeing healthier, higher yielding plants that are more resilient to pest and disease pressure. ... I am confident this grant has been a significant factor."*

Maria Mata, with Mata Family Farm in Gaston, wrote: *"We are a small family farm, located in Gaston Oregon. As a small family farm, it won't take much for everything to go wrong and have extreme losses. Change of weather from extreme heat to extreme weather can completely halt us. With programs like these small farmers can plan and prepare for weather conditions and changes. We are very dependent on the success of our farm. ... We are very thankful for programs like this and for the people who are always looking out for the small farming community."*

Thank you for your consideration of these testimonials.

Megan Kemple, Executive Director
Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network