

Submitter: Monica Schulz
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2979

Dear Oregon Lawmakers:

Oregon's small farms and ranches, and the outlets where they market their products, are increasingly threatened by extreme weather events and wildfires. Supporting the Food Systems Resilience Programs in HB 2979 means investing in climate resilience, disaster preparedness, conservation and stewardship, rural economic development, and thriving small businesses all over our state. These investments benefit not just farmers and local food outlets but entire communities by fostering access to healthy, local food, creating hubs for community engagement and expanding nutrition incentive programs.

"Extreme weather events such as heat domes, drought, and wildfire smoke are putting Oregon's farms and ranches at risk. Farmers and ranchers are resilient, but they need financial support to invest in equipment, infrastructure and resources for irrigation efficiency, shading and cooling, and soil health. This relatively small investment in funding by the Oregon state legislature helps protect crops and livestock and makes Oregon's small farms and ranches more resilient as wildfires and extreme weather events increase," said Megan Kemple, Executive Director of Oregon Climate and Agriculture Network.

"Farmers' markets play a crucial role within their local economies, providing a platform for small-scale vendors to sell their produce while fostering community connections. But, when wildfires, storms, or extreme heat disrupt market operations, producers suffer--unable to get their products to market, or worse, when their perishable produce is ruined," explained Anna Curtin, Co-chair of the Oregon Farmers Markets Association.

"This funding represents a collaborative effort to help our state's small and midsize, highly diversified and local market farmers adapt to the ongoing effects of the climate crisis. We are so proud to be a part of this coalition of forward thinking food system advocates, farmers, and policy makers who made this happen. Oregon is so lucky to still have a thriving small scale farming community. Our farmers are on the front lines of climate change and this funding helps those who need it most," said Alice Morrison, Co-Executive Director of Friends of Family Farmers.

Oregon's small farms, farmers' markets, and food hubs strengthen our communities and deserve your continued support in the face of increasing wildfires and extreme weather events. We urge you to prioritize funding for HB 2979 in the 2025 legislative session to ensure the continuation of these critical programs.

Sincerely,
Monica Schulz