

February 4, 2025

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

We are from Milwaukie and members of both People's Farmers' Market and Alberta Cooperative Grocery. We are 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.

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.

These programs are hugely impactful to us personally because we procure almost all of our food from Peoples Food Coop, Alberta Cooperative Grocery, and the Milwaukie, Oregon City and Hood River Farmers' Markets. SNAP/DUFB is extremely important to the farmers who sell their goods at all of these markets!

During the pandemic, it was our local farmers markets who were able to keep the food chain going and kept us fed with healthier options, while the large store supply chains faltered and had empty shelves.

Keeping these markets open year-around and in these times of extreme weather, climate change and other disruptions, is extremely important in maintaining the lifelines between us and our local farms and farmers.

OFMA and Farmers Market Fund 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 supported, and our communities fed.

Thank you,

Teresa and Kelby Bowers

People's Farmers' Market

Alberta Cooperative Grocery

Milwaukie Farmers' Market

Oregon City Farmers' Market

Hood River Farmers' Market

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