
4th February 2025

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

My name is Annaleise - I am a People's Farmers' Market community member from Portland. I am writing to express my strong support for **HB 2979**, and urge continued investment in Oregon's farmers' markets. Our farmers' markets offer critical infrastructure for local economies, small farms, and food access programs.

The **Famers 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 (DUFB) programs. However, demand **far exceeds available funding** - grant requests would have required more than double the resources OFMA has to distribute. Farmers' markets will struggle to continue serving our communities without renewed investment.

These programs have impacted me and those in my community deeply. In particular, the SNAP/DUFB program has allowed me to appropriately nourish myself and my family as we navigate the immense challenges that come with income instability. Healthful food is a basic need for survival, so how has it become so challenging to access? Why is it becoming more difficult for farmers committed to healthfully raising our food to continue their work? When you are struggling to meet your basic needs, all of this feels debilitating, lonely, and hopeless. Not only do farmers' markets benefit the community through nourishing our bodies, but being in the literal space provides another kind of nourishment. It is essential for humans to feel connected to others to be well. Connecting over food is one of the most fundamental ways we can accomplish this. Oregon's farmers' markets offer a respite from the grinding challenges we face due to economic insecurity, climate change, and living in a systemically and environmentally imposed state of resource scarcity. We - farmers, buyers, customers, community members, your family, my family - need

this support. These programs will hugely benefit individuals and families, rippling out in ways we may never be able to quantify, but *will* be able to feel. Do the right thing.

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**.

In Community,

Annaleise Girone

People's Farmer's Market