

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

My name is Nate Sturgeon, and I am a **People's Farmers' Market** community member from Portland. 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, 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 impact me personally because:

I use SNAP, which covers just enough to get by these days with the rising cost of food. I also have chronic GI issues, and high quality produce and other food is one of the very important things that helps me to manage the condition and be somewhat functional. For instance, by allowing me to attend college full time (PCC and PSU) with a plan to enter a career pathway that will get me off of public assistance. At which point I plan to support People's Food Coop and other local markets with my own money.

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,

Nate Sturgeon

PEOPLE'S FARMERS' MARKET

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