The following was presented at the committee meeting on Feb. 5, 2025:

"Co-chairs Helm & Owens, Vice-chair McDonald, and members of the committee: My name is Kristy Athens, I live in Wallowa County, and I'm here to talk about the value to rural Oregon of House Bill 2979.

"I founded a food hub in 2020 called Good Groceries, which basically brings the farmers market to you. This model is popular with folks who support local businesses, value high-quality food, and appreciate the convenience of home delivery. I operate in Wallowa and Union counties, and purchase products from small ag businesses across Oregon and Washington.

"Last year Good Groceries received a Food Hub Infrastructure grant that supported major upgrades to the warehouse: a refrigerated cargo van, walk-in cooler, and energy-efficient freezers. This game-changer is still revealing its advantages, but I can report that the van allows me to safely and professionally deliver more orders in one trip; and to buy more food, both at one time and overall, from local farms. The new appliances store more items with better organization, enabling superior food-safety protocols.

"Because of these improvements, Good Groceries continues to grow. In 2024, I added 158 customers and 12 new vendors, resulting in an increase of 25% in gross revenue over 2023, and a 261% increase over Year One. Up to 80% of the price of a product goes to the farmer, rancher, fisher, or maker who produced it; last year I paid them more than $53,000.

"Good Groceries is an LLC but functions more like a community service project. It is, to my knowledge, the only certified Benefit Company in Eastern Oregon. Good Groceries donates $1 of each sale to local food pantries; in 2024 I sent $645 to help feed our community.

"Without OCFSN, this equipment would have been out of reach for years. This funding helps Good Groceries support resiliency in Northeast Oregon. Thank you."

Addendum: Photos of the equipment are available on the Good Groceries website: https://www.goodgroceriesnw.com/about