

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

My name is Jim King and I am a Food Hub Operator from Newport, Oregon. I am writing today to support HB 2979 and tell you how crucial it is that we continue our investment in the local food system by supporting small farms and ranches and the outlets that they depend on, especially farmers markets and food hubs. These community institutions not only bring economic opportunity into rural Oregon, they connect urban and rural areas through agricultural marketplaces, provide access to local food, and tap into nutrition assistance programs that spread these fresh Oregon grown fruits, vegetables, and meats to people who might not otherwise be able to get them. We need to make sure that these vital small businesses can withstand the natural disasters, worsening storms, and unpredictable weather that has been increasing in recent years.

This personally impacts me because assistance for new infrastructure allows me to provide a safe and functional work space to a wide variety of local food producers on the Oregon Coast. We support both fishermen and farmers in their pursuit of processing, packaging and marketing their local products, and updated infrastructure like processing rooms, updated storage capacity, and refrigeration is needed to support these operations. When the winter comes, our local farmer's markets shut down, and our facility is one of the only in the area that can provide a sales channel for local food producers. As our market and facility capacity grows, we have only been able to do so with support in our infrastructure funding from sources similar to HB 2979. As we support over 14 local businesses, and serve over 250 local customers and counting, we contribute actively to the flow of commerce in our rural community.

It is time for Oregon to renew its commitment to our small farms and local food system. They keep our communities fed and insulated from the fluctuations of the centralized food supply chain. They are a vital part of our collective wellbeing, environmental stewardship, and the future of food. Please support HB 2979.

Thank you,

Jim King

Central Coast Food Web

Newport, OR