

Submitter: Genevieve Flanagan

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2979

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

My name is Genevieve Flanagan and I am a farm owner in Portland. 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.

In the past ten years of owning my farm, I've documented extreme weather events becoming more common, and causing more damage. This includes extreme heat, wind and winter events, all of which are an outcome of a changing climate. In addition to affecting crop loss, these events also impact sales outlets when farmers markets and local restaurants are forced to close. Funds that help farmers prepare for these events with better infrastructure and more resilient plant species, then affects the local economy, providing residents with fresh produce and restaurants with a steady supply (ultimately reducing the need for imports). My farm has personally applied for disaster resiliency grants that involve shade structures and moisture sensing equipment, and there are many more examples of simple and practical methods that farmers can use. But funding must be prioritized before farmers are forced out of business. Between land costs and climate change, we must commit to Oregon agriculture and that includes the strength of small farms spread across the state.

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,

Genevieve Flanagan

The Urban Acre Homestead

Portland