



Hot Mama Salsa

February 6, 2025

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

My name is Nikki Guerrero and I am a Food Hub Operator, Shared Kitchen Operator, and food manufacturer from Portland, OR. 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: I run both a manufacturing plant and a food business that attended farmers markets, statewide events, and delivers directly to retail grocery outlets. Over the last three years we have lost a minimum of one week of operations due to weather related events. We also lease space and offer co-manufacturing services so our closures also affect several other business entities.

In 2024 I took on an expansion and a large investment to rehab a processing facility that New Seasons built in 2014. I was also the recipient of a work safety grant and was able repair one of our electric pallet jacks with the funds, this led to improved ergonomics for my staff.

I was also able to use some of the funds to install a gate around our loading bay, insuring safety for our two delivery vehicles that were incurring regular vandalism and theft.

Operating in this facility allowed my business to grow by 24% in 2024 and has also allow us to offer co-manufacturing services and shared space to other business allowing for their growth and stability.

I believe that small food and collaboration are a direct way to support local agriculture, establish meaningful and stable work for our community members, and to offer our customers a more diverse and higher quality product. It is imperative that Oregon continues to invest in small collaborative food entities to combat the rampant consolidation happening in the distribution, farming, and grocery industries.

Sincerely yours,

Nikki M Guerrero

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