

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

My name is Whitney Nogle Cabral and I am a cattle rancher and ranch-to-table beef company owner from Grass Valley. 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 these programs have been beneficial to so many small, Oregon family owned and operated farms and ranches, including our own. As you know, wildfires have struck havoc on Central and Eastern Oregon for years. Personally, we lost thousands of acres of pasture in 2024 to the Larch Creek Fire and the Monkey Creek Fire. However, thanks to the Disaster Resilience grant funds we received in the spring of 2024, we were able to purchase an additional stock trailer (from another small Oregon family business) and had double the capacity to move over 100 head of cattle in half the time, and out of harms way. We can thankfully say that we did not lose any animals to those fires and again, it was thanks to the grant funds we received to purchase an additional stock trailer to move them. We were also able to help neighbors relocate their animals in the Monkey Creek Fire as well.

Our family's income is primarily from our cattle and beef sales, and as you're aware, any losses are traumatic to our way of living. My family came to the Pacific Northwest in 1877 and opened a butcher shop and ran cattle and sheep. Nearly 150 (148 to be exact) years later we are still here and continuing what our family started. We proudly ship our home-grown beef to schools, small-businesses and residents all across the state of Oregon. We have also shipped to multiple states including Hawaii, Tennessee, Texas, Montana, New Mexico, California, Washington and Iowa. Being able to provide people with our natural, home-raised beef is something that we are so proud of.

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,

Whitney Nogle Cabral

Cabral Livestock & 29 Branded Beef

Grass Valley