

Testimony_Verdant Phoenix Farm_Phoenix, OR



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

My name is Rhianna Simes, M.S.Ed. and I own and operate Verdant Phoenix Farm in Phoenix, Oregon. I am also the chair of the leadership team for the Oregon Community Food System Network (OCFSN).

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.

As a small business owner, where my product can die or be killed by environmental factors beyond my control, farming is a HUGE risk. We are able to mitigate these risks through OCFSN funding opportunities where we can invest in our resilience. We need to make sure that the local farmers that grow our food can withstand the natural disasters, worsening storms, and unpredictable weather that has been increasing in recent years.

We want to continue to grow food for our communities, but we need the resources of the Oregon Community Food System Network (and the grant programs they administer) to help more farmers prepare for the unexpected.

Please commit to our small farms and local food system. We need farms that are prepared for the future, and can face the challenges of today.

Please support HB 2979.

Thank you,

Rhianna Simes, M.S.Ed.

Verdant Phoenix Farm, owner

Oregon Community Food System Network Leadership Team, Chair

Phoenix, Oregon