

My name is Gia Matzinger. I am the owner/operator at Deschutes Canyon Garlic in Terrebonne, Oregon. I am in support of HB 2979 because it will make a big difference for small farms and ranches in our state as well as the food economies they rely on. It makes a big difference for those enrolled in food assistance programs to connect with healthy food.

In 2024 our farm was a recipient of funding from the OCSFN Farmer and Rancher Resiliency Grant Program. The biggest asset to our business is our soil, not our garlic. Without our soil being healthy, we cannot make money. Climate threats like rising temperatures and wells drying up really test the crops, so we need to rely on support from the soil to buffer those challenges. The biggest way that we do this is through growing cover crops in rotation with the garlic. Cost of seed has been rising, (approximately 6-7% annually since 2000 according to USDA). So cover cropping our entire field at once would have cost nearly half of our operating budget. This grant funding allowed us to buy seed and apply manure to all of our acreage at once in order to get this process started, so that our garlic crop in 2029 will benefit from these soil applications started in 2024. That will cut our yearly spending on fertility and water application significantly in future years. It was a big impact on our farm, and I can only imagine that this effect multiplied across the state will have noticeable impact on our local food economies.

We also saw our best local food hub/distributor change hands, lose all of it's employees and barely hang on by a thread to survive in recent years. It is an excellent connector of local farms and customers, facilitating the relationships that farmers don't have time for. Food hubs like these honor the products that farmers work so hard to provide at marginal profits while chain wholesalers treat us as dispensable compared to California suppliers. They should be supported in their work as they compete with chain grocery stores and limited resources. Oregon regional economies would greatly benefit from connections like this.

Furthermore, we accept SNAP and DUFB tokens at our farm stand with the help of our local farmers market organization. This program is a win-win since farmers like us get more customers and food assistance program participants get the healthiest food available. Please support HB 2979.

Thank you
Gia Matzinger
Deschutes Canyon Garlic
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