

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

My name is Jennifer Denson and I am a Food Hub Operator and Shared Kitchen Operator, from Eugene, 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: Burrito Brigade's largest program, Waste To Taste (W2T), operates off of weekly food donations and distributes to those experiencing food insecurity by way of our no-barrier access free food pantry. We open every weekday by appointment and walk-ins. Our commercial kitchen supports a host of food prep space for mutual aid groups, farmers and our other two projects: Weekend Burrito Brigade and Little Free Pantries. Most importantly our community, which includes master food preservers, processors, chefs, W2T shoppers and volunteers RELY HEAVILY ON LOCAL FARMERS vegetables, fruits, meat and dairy donations every season. It would feel like winter everyday without our farmers!

This Food Hub/ Shared Kitchen Operators:

- New infrastructure allows me to create a larger market for local producers, expand services, etc
- New infrastructure allows me to extend sourcing and sales opportunities into more regional markets within Oregon
- Have you seen increased demand or changed demand from your customers in the last few years?
- Do you have more farmers looking for an alternative outlet when weather prevents in person sales?
- How much food and economic activity does your hub contribute?
- What would you like to do with grant funds

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,

Jennifer Denson

Burrito Brigade, Eugene

