



Dear Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, and Members of the House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water,

My name is Katy Kolker, and I am the Executive Director of Portland Farmers Market from Portland, Oregon. I am writing to strongly support **HB 2979**, and urge continued investment in **Oregon's farmers markets**, which serve as critical infrastructure for local economies, small farms, and food access programs.

Farmers markets are experiencing extreme weather. Heat waves, wildfires, droughts, and storms disrupt operations and threaten vendors. We need this funding to respond to these challenges and ensure markets remain open, accessible, and sustainable.

The Farmers Market Climate Resilience Grant Fund and SNAP matching 'Growth Grants' have been lifelines, helping markets upgrade infrastructure, implement cooling and smoke mitigation strategies, and expand SNAP/Double Up Food Bucks programs. However, demand far exceeds available funding—grant requests would have required more than double the resources that Oregon Farmers Market Association has to distribute. Without renewed investment, farmers markets will struggle to continue serving their communities.

These programs directly impact me and my community. The five farmers markets that our organization manages have faced a rise in extreme weather conditions like excessive heat, smoke, ice, and snow, forcing us to close markets or adjust operating hours several times in recent years. These changes negatively affect food access in our community and the economic stability of small food and farm businesses vending at our markets. This year, we plan to apply for a Farmers Market Climate Resilience Grant to enhance our market infrastructure against climate-related events. The funds will help our markets stay open and operate safely during extreme weather when possible, and help mitigate the financial impact to vendors and markets when forced to close due to climate-related events.

This bill also supports SNAP matching programs at our farmers markets. In 2024, we distributed over \$200,000 in matching currency through the Double Up Food Bucks program across our five farmers markets. The Double Up Food Bucks program enhances access to fresh, local produce while supporting small regional farms. The Growth Grant program, whose funding depends on the passage of HB 2979, supports the continuation and growth of SNAP matching at farmers markets, and will continue to make healthy food options accessible to everyone in our community. For our markets specifically, this grant will help cover a portion of the necessary costs for staff to distribute, redeem and reconcile SNAP matching currencies.



Oregon Farmers Market Association and Farmers Market Fund can leverage state funds to match federal funding, strengthening our farmers markets and local food systems. Please support HB 2979 to keep our markets strong, our farmers supported, and our communities fed.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katy Kolker".

Katy Kolker

Executive Director

Portland Farmers Market

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