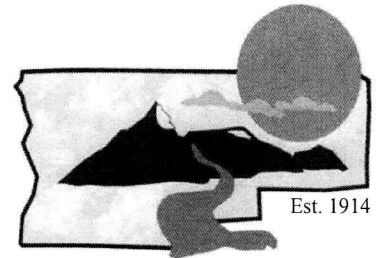


JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

66 S.E. "D" St., Suite A • Madras, Oregon 97741 • Ph: (541) 475-2449 • FAX: (541) 475-4454



February 20, 2023

Kelly Simmelink

Jefferson County Commissioner

Oregon State Legislature

Senate Committee On Early Childhood and Behavioral Health

Subject: Support for SB 779 – AgriStress Helpline

Dear Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Anderson and Committee Members.

Greetings from Jefferson County—the Carrot Seed Capital of the World and home to some of the greatest farmers and ranchers in our state. I am writing to strongly urge your continued support for the AgriStress Helpline by passing SB 779.

In my own community, we have tragically lost several agricultural producers to suicide. With falling commodity prices, rising operational costs, and severe irrigation water shortages, our farmers and ranchers face immense pressure. This combination creates a crisis in which too many feel they have no way out.

The AgriStress Helpline, in partnership with Oregon State University, has been a lifeline for rural communities, including Jefferson County. Its specialized support system understands the unique challenges of those who work the land and ensures that resources are available when they are needed most.

Your support of SB 779 will help ensure that we have done everything possible to prevent the loss of friends, family members, and valued members of our agricultural communities. I urge you to stand with us in protecting the well-being of those who feed our state and nation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Simmelink". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly Simmelink