

Submitter: Sophie Els  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006  
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

I am writing to express my support of HB 2979, which provides funding for Oregon's Farmer and Rancher Disaster Resilience Grants as well as similar funding for Food Hubs and Farmers Markets.

Oregon's small farms and ranches, and the outlets where they market their products, are a key part of making our state resilient to changes and breakdowns in the centralized food system. Supporting the Food Systems Resilience Programs in HB 2979 means investing in climate resilience, disaster preparedness, conservation and stewardship, rural economic development, and thriving small businesses all over our state. These investments benefit not just farmers and local food outlets but entire communities by fostering access to healthy, local food, creating hubs for community engagement, and expanding nutrition incentive programs.

The Farmer and Rancher Disaster Resilience grants funded by this ask are supporting our small and underserved producers to be more resilient to fire and extreme weather events. This funding is a great alternative to traditional disaster relief funding, as it has given farmers the resources to maintain their crops and livestock through disasters, rather than being compensated by the State after they lose them. This is a strategic and responsible use of state funding.

HB 2979 passed unanimously out of the House Committee on Ag, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water with over 200 submissions of written testimony in support, including a letter signed by 248 farms, food hubs, farmers markets, community organizations and others.

Continuity of this funding is critical! These grant programs are oversubscribed and fill critical gaps not covered by other funding sources. Viable farms, farmers markets, and food hubs make our food system more resilient, and they need your support.

I urge you to fund HB 2979. Thank you.