

Submitter: Maggie Michaels
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 urge your support of HB 2979, which provides funding for Oregon's farmers, ranchers, food hubs, and farmers markets.

Oregon's small farms and ranches, and the outlets where they market their products, are increasingly threatened by extreme weather events and wildfires. 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.

Please consider the following:

Funding from these programs has been distributed across Oregon, prioritizing rural and underserved communities.

Funding requests for these grant programs were more than twice as much as the amount of funding available.

The economic impact of these programs show they are an investment into our communities, rather than just an expenditure.

Viable farms, farmers markets, and food hubs make our food system more resilient!

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! When funding is available one year and not the next, interest in these programs decreases, and it becomes difficult for farmers and community organizations to anticipate what will be available and take best advantage of it.

I urge you to fund HB 2979. Thank you.

Maggie Michaels