

Submitter: Caitlin Seyfried  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Dear Joint Committee on Ways & Means:

My name is Caitlin Seyfried and I am a farmer and community food systems consultant living in Astoria. I am writing today in support of HB 2979, which provides crucial support for the pillars of our local food systems: farmers, farmers markets, and food hubs. These institutions foster economic opportunity in rural Oregon, provide access to fresh local foods, and constitute an incredibly resilient non-centralized food system alternative to conventional agribusiness. These community businesses have been there to fill the gaps when our global supply chain breaks down. These community businesses also specialize in retaining and passing on important knowledge about growing food, sharing food, selling food, and processing food. Finally, these businesses care for the people of Oregon and the land of Oregon and show that in their actions by providing good jobs, growing food that nourishes people, and protecting the soil and water. 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.

I am a farmer in rural Oregon (Olney, just outside of Astoria) where we grow produce on a small scale. Over the years, the seasons and weather patterns have become less reliable. Unpredictable temperatures, precipitation, and natural disasters like heatwaves have impacted the farm more and more each year. One example: new patterns of insects and birds have caused increased destruction of food crops in ways that we cannot prepare for. We have new species coming in and with seasonal changes, more predation in the early season on the young plants.

Farmers here on the coast rely on local farmers markets (Astoria Sunday Market, Seaside Farmers Market, Cannon Beach Farmers Market, Manzanita Farmers Market) and the local food hubs (North Coast Food Web, Food Roots, Clatskanie Food Hub) for market channels where we can accessibly sell our produce.

As a small farm, almost all grants and funding programs are an uphill battle, or take way too much time and money to apply for and work with. These programs have been designed for large farms. For most farms in our area \$8-10k for a project could drastically impact the farm.

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. I urge you to pass HB 2979 to renew commitment to our small farms and local food systems. Please support HB 2979.

Thank you,

Caitlin Seyfried