

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

My name is Nikolaus Elsaesser and I am a community member from Corvallis. I am here 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.

How would having increased access to local food despite challenging conditions impact you?

- Increased access to local food despite challenging conditions (harsher climate, extreme weather, disasters, etc.) would help protect the many community members here working in agriculture, the food that I rely on each and every week, and lessen the my and my community's dependence on external sources of food and disaster relief which will be increasingly scarce as climate becomes more extreme within and outside of Oregon. Relying on food from beyond my community in the event of extreme weather and climate disaster is not a bet I want to make. The quickest relief we can ever have is that which is closest to us! Gambling on federal and statewide relief efforts is not a bet I want our communities to make. Help us prepare ourselves so we are not at the mercy of larger institutions who barely know us, and thus don't have the same level of care as the people who we see every day, our community.

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.

Nikolaus Elsaesser

Corvallis