

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

My name is Michelle Corse. I am a dedicated farmers market customer from Tigard. I urge your support of HB 2979, which provides funding for Oregon's farmers markets, farmers, ranchers, and food hubs.

Farmers markets and food producers in Oregon are facing increasing climate challenges, such as wildfires, extreme heat, flooding and severe winter weather that threaten their long-term sustainability. 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 farmers markets but entire communities by fostering access to healthy, local food, creating hubs for community engagement and expanding nutrition incentive programs.

Oregon farmers markets are economic powerhouses, drawing millions of visitors annually, and supporting more than 7,000 small, Oregon-based farms and businesses. They generate \$61 million in revenue and infuse their communities with economic stability.

In the first round of funding supported by the Climate Resilience funds, 47 Oregon farmers markets received a total of \$740,000 in grant funding. Continuity of this funding is critical! A majority of markets in Oregon are managed by one or two staff members, many part time and underpaid, or not paid at all. HB 2979 bill funds a grant program that is easy for these busy market managers to access and implement. And 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.