



Friends of Family Farmers ♦ PO Box 751 ♦ Junction City, OR 97448

503-581-7124 ♦ www.FriendsofFamilyFarmers.org

Dear Co-Chairs Sanchez and Leiber, Vice Co-Chairs Girod, Gomberg, and Smith, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

I am writing today on behalf of Friends of Family Farmers to express strong support for HB 2979 and to urge the committee to advance this crucial piece of legislation to invest in our food system. This program has been an expansion of disaster relief efforts started in 2021. Small farms and community food system sales outlets like farmers markets and food hubs play a vital role in our state. They provide food to remote communities, help small businesses launch and expand, and support rural economies. In addition to all the community benefits, they bring nutrition incentive programs like SNAP, Double Up Food Bucks, and many more independent local matching programs to communities in need around the state.

Since expanding the program to include resilience grants in 2023, the state has taken crucial steps to support farms, ranches, food hubs, and farmers markets weathering the storms, extreme weather conditions and natural disasters in Oregon. Wrap around support is necessary, and this program provides this by including funds for not only farms and ranches, but the markets and food hubs they rely on. By investing in durable infrastructure for local food sales outlets, the state is creating opportunities for small farm businesses to grow and build customer bases. By investing in equipment and supplies for small farms, the state is increasing our communities' abilities to feed themselves, making us more resilient to breakdowns in centralized food supply chains. By investing in Farmers Markets and food hubs, we are giving the distribution and sales outlets back to the community as well. This keeps more capacity in our rural and agricultural towns, builds stronger connections between urban and rural spaces in Oregon, and is good for entrepreneurship and small business in the state.

This is not simply a grant program but an investment in the future of Oregon. When farmers take home more money, the rural communities of Oregon benefit. Especially when those farmers are focused on direct to consumer sales and feeding their immediate community. According to a study conducted by OSU in Central Oregon¹; the economic multiplier of these types of farms (those selling at farmers markets, farmstands or directly to their local grocery store) is higher than non-local agriculture (1.74 vs 1.36), more money stays in the community from local food (\$0.76 of every \$1) than from imported food (\$0.28 for every \$1), and local farms create more jobs (26 jobs

¹ <https://smallfarms.oregonstate.edu/economic-impact-local-food-producers-central-oregon>



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per \$1M in sales) compared to commodity farming (12 jobs per \$1M in sales). This means that every dollar we put into resilient local food systems will give a better return for the rural communities where our farmers live and work.

Please prioritize funding for the programs outlined in HB 2979. It is good for Oregon.

Sincerely,

Alice Morrison
Co-Executive Director
Friends of Family Farmers