

Submitter: Eileen White
On Behalf Of: The Dalles Farmers Market
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Dear Co-Chair Helm, Co-Chair Owens, and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Wildfire,

My name is Eileen White, and I am a Farmers Market Manager from The Dalles. I am writing to strongly support HB 2979, and urge continued investment in Oregon's farmers markets, which serve as critical infrastructure for local economies, small farms, and food access programs. Farmers markets are experiencing extreme weather. Heat waves, wildfires, droughts, and storms disrupt operations and threaten vendors. We need this funding to address these challenges and ensure that markets remain open, accessible, and sustainable. The Farmers Market Climate Resilience Grant Fund and SNAP support grants have been lifelines, helping markets upgrade infrastructure, implement cooling and smoke mitigation strategies, and expand SNAP/Double Up Food Bucks programs. But demand far exceeds available funding—grant requests would have required more than double the resources OFMA has to distribute. Without renewed investment, farmers' markets will struggle to continue serving their communities. These programs impact me personally because, in the past few years, we have had to close early due to heat and once canceled the market due to smoke. We have received an OFMA Climate Resilience Grant, which will help us purchase equipment to run our market in the event of extreme weather. OFMA and FMF can leverage state funds to match federal funding, strengthening our farmers markets and local food systems. We cannot afford to fall behind. Please support HB 2979 to keep our markets strong, support our farmers, and keep our communities fed.

Thank you, Eileen White, Market Manager
The Dalles Farmers Market
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