



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 3rd, 2013

Testimony in favor of HB3450- James Beard Public Market: Oregon's Market

Chair Read, members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Jennifer Williamson, I represent House District 36 - Portland's Westside, thank you for giving HB 3450 a hearing today, I am excited to testify in support of The James Beard Public Market: Oregon's market.

Our state is rightfully known for the quality and integrity of its agricultural bounty. Since its founding Portland has been the state's center for agricultural commerce. Some of the finest public markets in the country served the state from the 1870s until 1941 when the last of Portland's true public markets closed.

The James Beard Public Market is named after Oregon's very own food legend James Beard. He was born in Portland where his mother ran the Gladstone Hotel and his father worked at the city's customs house. The Beard family vacationed on the coast in Gearhart. There, Beard was exposed to the unique local foods of Oregon.

According to Beard's memoir his earliest memory of food was the Lewis and Clark Exposition of 1905, when he was just two years old. Beard recalled:

"I was taken to the exposition two or three times. The thing that remained in my mind above all others—I think it marked my life—was watching Triscuits and shredded wheat

biscuits being made. Isn't that crazy? At two years old that memory was made. It intrigued the hell out of me."

James Beard frequented the street-side markets in Portland at his mother's side and learned the magic of cooking with local ingredients, a philosophy that would define his career and lead him to become the "dean of American cooking." He was America's first TV chef even before Julia! Now, the James Beard Awards are the Oscar and Emmy's of the food world and his name is synonymous with celebrating the regional bounty of wherever you are: he was a proud Oregonian and had a head start on knowing great food. The James Beard Public Market will honor his Oregon roots and provide a living legacy to his contribution to Oregon's food culture—one that the national media consistently recognizes.

As Oregonians, we know our locally produced food and drinks are among the state's most valuable treasures and biggest economic drivers. The James Beard Public Market is a great opportunity to provide small businesses a year round showcase for their products. This daily, indoor-outdoor marketplace, will represent the state's farms, orchards, vineyards, breweries, fisheries and ranches, strengthening Oregon's rising culinary reputation and economy.

James Beard Market is a smart investment that aligns with our state's priorities of locally focused development, economic sustainability, and environmental conservation.

I urge your support for this project.