

**TO: Co-Chairs Sen. Lew Frederick and Rep. Brad Witt
Natural Resources Subcommittee Committee
and members of the subcommittee**

From: Rebecca Landis on behalf of the Oregon Farmers' Markets Association

Subject: Testimony for ODA staffing package(s) -- for Feb. 22, 2017 meeting

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of ODA food safety staffing requests.

I am a member of the Food Safety Advisory Committee in my capacity as policy adviser to the Oregon Farmers' Markets Association. OFMA is a membership organization whose mission is supporting local agriculture and healthy communities by strengthening and promoting Oregon's farmers' markets.

I'm writing to support the Program Action Package for 2 additional full-time permanent inspector positions (funded with Other Funds). This package, combined with continuation of 3 limited duration positions, will give the division some needed tools to reduce its backlog of inspections.

As Oregon's economy recovered from the recession, food processing business formation seems to have accelerated, leading to an increased inspection workload. New businesses may require more education than established firms, so the needed length of inspections may increase.

At the same time, a number of staffers have retired or taken other jobs. While demographic shifts are not unique to ODA's food safety program, the lengthy credentialing process for these positions magnifies the lost inspection capability incurred at each retirement.

I am pleased to note that ODA recognized the need for action and was working on inspector staffing prior to issuance of the Secretary of State's audit. The backlog has multiple causes and thus probably requires multiple strategies. These strategies include better data analysis technique and practice, in addition to the added positions.

It is my hope that a wise investment of licensing fees will over the biennium result in most licensees receiving an inspection at the time intervals appropriate to each product's level of risk and other risk indicators.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this Program Action Package.