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**Council President Lynn Peterson**

Joint Interim Committee on the First Special Session of 2020  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

June 21, 2020

President Courtney, Speaker Kotek and Members of the Committee,

I write today urging your support for LC 74. A state meat inspection program run by the Oregon Department of Agriculture helps address our meat inspection capacity concerns and helps to ensure that we have enough meat processing plants to meet local and national demand.

As an elected official, representing the 1.7 million residents of the Metro area in the Portland region, I am concerned about the inability to promote and purchase local from our own cattle ranchers, the humane treatment of workers and cattle that I believe only Oregonians can provide, Oregon residents' food insecurity issues, as well as the positive impacts that small-scale agriculture has for climate change.

### **Buying Local**

In Oregon, meat must be processed at USDA-inspected facilities to be legally sold into retail or wholesale markets. Custom meat establishments (which are licensed and inspected by ODA) can only process animals for the owners of those animals. If I wanted to buy beef from a rancher, I could buy a quarter of a cow and pick up the processed quarter from the custom processor. But that is not always within the financial reach of Oregonians – not just from the upfront cost but the refrigeration necessary to keep that meat frozen until eaten.

Creating a state program and building the in-house expertise could help ODA provide greater technical assistance to meat facilities that want to sell retail or wholesale. It could help our state provide valuable additional options for livestock producers to direct market their products and support rural economies. And expanded, modernized food inspection procedures can ensure public oversight of food production and strict adherence to safety standards.

### **Humane treatment of workers and animals**

I believe that our own ranchers care about the treatment of the animals that they have invested their time, energy and resources in and would demand that the animals are treated humanely, using best practices.

And I further believe that Oregon would hold meat processors to a higher standard than other states that have not treated their workers humanely in general but especially during the COVID pandemic. I believe that we can and will do better.

**Food Insecurity Issues**

I have been volunteering with the Oregon Food Bank's distribution in Clackamas County. The boxes we pack for seniors and other are lacking high quality protein. While it may always be a challenging task to get fresh meat to our most needy, if they go to purchase it themselves, it needs to be affordable. We need to be able to bring down the cost of local meat so that our residents can afford to feed their families high quality food. Having state meat processing plants would help reduce transport costs and lower the overall cost of meat.

**Climate Change**

As things stand today, there is a lot of transport of these animals out of state for processing, leading to a high amount of diesel emissions. And then that meat is transported around the country to reach consumers. Keeping these activities local will have a positive impact on reduction of GHG emissions and diesel particulates.

Thank you for all your efforts to help our rural economy thrive, our residents more affordably purchase local meat, decreasing GHG emissions and diesel particulate and raising the bar for the treatment of animals and the workforce at these processing plants. I urge your support for LC 74.

Sincerely,

Lynn Peterson  
Metro Council President