



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Agriculture

635 Capitol St NE Ste 100

Salem, OR 97301-2532



May 6, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

I write you today requesting an emergency temporary exemption from the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Federal Meat Inspection Act requirements administered by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to allow facilities that are licensed under Oregon's Department of Agriculture (ODA) to sell and donate processed meat intrastate.

Oregon is experiencing the shared increased need to supply food banks and local markets with meat products. The developing impacts of COVID-19 on the national and local food distribution system has increased the demand on a safe, secure food supply. During this unprecedented time, leveraging all capacity to provide a staple food to Oregon's local communities is needed.

I realize this request is a departure from the normal cooperative agreement process for state-federal partnership in operating a formal state meat inspection program. Oregon is exploring the creation and approval of a state meat inspection program and entering into a formal partnership with USDA, however, this request would be temporary due to the supply challenges we have seen due to the current pandemic.

Maintaining a healthy supply chain from farm to fork is top priority for Oregon. Our state licensed meat processors could, in this time of emergency, step in and provide local ranchers an additional market, and food banks and consumers a high-quality, safe product.

Our communities look to us for leadership and action in times of need. Thank you for your timely review of my request, and I look forward to continuing to work with our federal partners to assist Oregonians during this unprecedented and difficult time.

Sincerely,

Alexis M. Taylor

Oregon Department of Agriculture, Director

*Thank you for
your attention to
this matter! AT*

