June 24, 2020

Chair Senator Peter Courtney
Chair Representative Tina Kotek
Joint Interim Committee on the First Special Session of 2020
State Capitol 900 Court Street NE Salem, OR 97301
Sent via electronic mail to j1ss.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Re: Support for LC 74 – State Inspection Program for Meat Product Processing and Sales

Dear Chairs Courtney and Kotek and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Beef Council I thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments in support of HB 4206.

The Oregon Beef Council is one of Oregon's agricultural commodity commissions. It receives assessments from all Oregon cattle producers and uses these funds for research, promotion, export development, and other activities to benefit producers.

The Oregon Beef Council has discussed ways to help deal with a shortage of meat processing through efficiencies and new ideas that might help beef and cattle producers in Oregon. These discussions have included options that would maintain the highest quality of inspection, while providing more efficient processes and options. At several of our recent meetings the option of a state inspection program has been discussed and the consensus was to pursue this if the proper avenue came forth. It is our understanding that HB 4206 would be a move to help address some of these issues by giving the Oregon Department of Agriculture authority to oversee a state meat processing meat inspection program that has high standards similar to federal programs.

At this time, the food supply chain faces limitations that we have not faced before. The passage of HB 4206 would help stabilize our local food supply system by allowing for more meat processing facilities that can buy from Oregon producers and sell into commercial channels. This would be good for Oregon cattle producers, processors, and consumers.

Thank you for your attention to these comments submitted on behalf of the farmers and ranchers of Oregon and the Oregon Beef Council.

Sincerely,

Curtis Martin
Oregon Beef Council