



Dear Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward and Rayfield and Members of the Committee,

The High Desert Food and Farm Alliance (HDFFA) is a 501c3 non-profit serving the tri-county area of Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties. Since 2012, we have sought to support the local community of food growers, raisers, crafters, and consumers, through education and other supports. We, HDFFA and our eight-person Farmer & Rancher Advisory Committee, are writing in support of OR HB 2785 for the following reasons:

- In 2017, HDFFA partnered with Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, and OSU Extension and the Center for Small Farms and Community Food Systems to measure the value of local food in our region. An interview of 28 Central Oregon farmers and ranchers was conducted and found that those farmer/ranchers provided \$1.5 million in sales and \$248,000 in wages and salaries on their farm operations. The study also found:
 - For every dollar spent on local food, \$0.76 stays in Central Oregon compared to \$0.28 when you buy imported food.
 - If we had more season extenders, improved farm and ranch infrastructure, and increased productivity and efficiencies, we could produce \$5.4M more in sales.
 - Economic activity from every five on-farm jobs generates two additional off-farm jobs.
 - If residents shifted 10% of our food purchases from commercial stores to local food from farmers, we would gain 13 jobs and invest \$263,000 in wages for Central Oregonians.
- Our rancher partners have noted problems with bottlenecks in processing due to limited processing capacity, non-USDA inspected facilities, and competition from game hunters and subsistence farmers; improvement and diversification of options is a start to easing this problem.
- Many of our rancher partners must drive out of Central Oregon to have their livestock slaughtered. Reduction of transportation time will save money for ranchers and will result in better end products and improved animal welfare, as livestock will be subjected to less stressful travel times.
- Additionally, this bill will help to reduce the carbon footprint of transporting livestock out of a community for processing, only to bring the product back for sales. Local agriculture has a role to play in reducing emissions and capturing carbon, and this bill is a step towards a more efficient and pollution-reducing processing system.



By investing \$10 million dollars into improved infrastructure projects and new facilities, you are not only improving the efficiency of meat processors in the state, but also the livelihoods of family ranchers, the health of community members, and the economic viability of Oregon's meat industry. We recognize that this bill is just one step along the path of creating a stronger local economy and stronger food security. HDFFA looks forward to working with our 100+ food business partners to support this and other programs that build local food resilience.

Sincerely,
Annie Nichols

Anne Nichols

*Farm and Ranch Support Manager
High Desert Food and Farm Alliance*