

**Testimony of Rebecca Landis on SB 507
before the Senate Committee on Natural Resources
Jan. 25, 2023**

I'm writing in support of the dash-1 amendments to Senate Bill 507, which are in the pipeline.

I have been running FMs since 1995, and I'm the longest-serving farmers' market manager in Oregon. Corvallis-Albany Farmers' Markets operates the outdoor markets in Corvallis and Albany, and we do contract work for the Corvallis Indoor Winter Market.

I serve on ODA's Food Safety Advisory Committee, where I have a bird's eye view of ODA's Food Safety's large workload -- which would be even larger today, had we not enacted pragmatic, scale-appropriate regulation for certain low-risk products.

I was part of an official legislative workgroup that worked for a year to propose what became the Farm Direct Law in 2011. I had a lot less company for the post-enactment work in 2012 as ODA wrote administrative rules to implement the law.

We can take pride in enacting a law -- carefully focused on farm direct marketers -- that had documented benefits just five years out.

In a 2018 journal article in *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, "Farm Direct at five years: An early assessment of Oregon's farm-focused cottage food law," (<https://www.foodsystemsjournal.org/index.php/fsj/article/download/621/606/12900>), OSU Extension measured the benefits, both expected and unanticipated:

- Create new, supplemental income streams
- Turn excess harvest and seconds into revenue, reduce waste and cost
- Add variety to market stall
- Test marketing, batches too small to co-pack, reduced per-unit cost
- Extend marketing season beyond availability of fresh produce
- Unanticipated Benefits to farms and communities in isolated rural regions
- Food security

Farmers' market managers help farm direct marketers understand where each potential product falls in the continuum of food safety regulations and exemptions.

SB 507 can simplify this process for farmers and for market managers -- and others who help direct market farmers, such as OSU's Small Farms program and ODA food safety staff.

I am especially hopeful about the potential to an increase in the number of products that can be sold via consignment booths at farmers' markets. Such a change would increase participation and product diversity without loss of safety.

Consignment is especially important in rural markets and small urban settings. These booths can be a stepping stone for beginning farmers or a more permanent solution for others who cannot produce enough to sustain a full stall at a market.

Like any bill that breaks new ground, some provisions were less than perfect at enactment.

And the world inevitably changes around us, necessitating some clarifications and enhancements over time.

We have the pandemic to thank for rapid growth in online sales platforms among farm direct marketers and organizations helping them.

While fewer farmers' markets are still running online platforms today than in 2020-21, there's still a need to clarify this area for helping organizations like North Coast Food Web. Clarifications will increase the chances of innovation in other parts of the state.

Syrup from big leaf maples or walnut trees was not a market product in 2011. Now OSU is working with a cohort of farmers who would benefit from inclusion in this law.

It's time to include some additional food preservation practices that food scientists agree will also be safe in the farm direct context: freeze drying, steam canning and pasteurization of juices.

Thank you for your consideration of these enhancements to the 2011 Farm Direct Law!