

Submitter: Megan Whiteford

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources

Measure: SB507

Greetings Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Girod, and members of the committee — my name is Megan Whiteford and I'm writing on behalf of my growing vegetable, herb and flower farm business.

Having spent the past ten years working on small-scale family farms in Oregon along with other states, I have seen a variety of farmer's experiences navigating the politics around producing value-added products that are made with ingredients mainly sourced from their own operation. In general this is in an attempt to make use of excess crop they have not been able to sell, and transform it into profit. The initial Farm Direct Marketing Law addresses a lot of this problem- it is a great law that opened up many opportunities for farmers. With a decade of use, there have been many changes in science and in the market climate. The pandemic initiated the start up of many online farmers markets- a convenient way for producers to sell product to a population who at the time was restricted in travel and exposure to crowds. These have proved to be a valuable shopping option for our consumers, and there is little difference between market and these online food hubs- food is delivered to customers in the same day of drop off at the hub locations.

I'm writing today in support of SB 507, which will provide much needed improvements and upgrades to Oregon's Farm Direct Marketing Law first enacted in 2011.

SB 507, with the forthcoming amendment, will:

Include entities that assist small producers by aggregating, delivering, and assisting with the sale of FDML eligible products, into the FDML regulatory framework.

Add steam canning and freeze drying to eligible processes that can be used for the production of preserves, jams, and canned fruit and vegetables.

Improve consumer access to FDML products by allowing additional sales opportunities through consignment.

Include certain herbal tea blends, juices, and maple syrup as eligible products under OR's FDML.

I am excited to see the changes proposed in SB 507. With these changes, I'll be able to create herbal tea blends from the herbs that I will be growing and I will also have the opportunity to steam can extra produce for consumers if I happen to have an abundance of certain crops.

SB 507 will help Oregon farmers and producers continue to sell safe, fresh produce directly to their consumers in the modern era.

With opportunities to increase revenue through additional safe, value-added products like herbal tea blends, steam canning, and the opportunity to expand marketing and

delivery avenues, SB 507 will help both Oregon's small producers and the customers they serve.

Oregonians are demanding more local, sustainable and fresh products accessible in their communities. With the boom in farmers markets over the last decade, and the expansion of food hubs and food delivery systems, it's time to ensure Oregon's Farm Direct Marketing Law keeps pace.

The improvements in the legislation before you will help improve upon our robust local food system, expand producers' sales and income opportunities, and give everyone a clearer regulatory framework about what foods can and cannot be sold farm-direct.

Countless farmers and consumers benefit from this model and we support the continuation and modernization of this important process.

I urge your support for SB 507. Thank you for your time and consideration.

All the best,

Meg Whiteford