



January 28, 2022

To the Oregon House Committee on Economic Development:

In support of OCVA and HB2909:

"The bonds between people that give them a sense of community are forged not only at the table, but throughout the whole process of putting food there."

- *Alice Waters, Proprietor, Chez Panisse, Berkeley, California*

Alice Waters wrote this in a letter circa 1996 to the Clinton administration, asking for their support of Farm to School gardens and programming. This quote has been a guiding star in my work since I came across it in 2015. I was opening a retail store/art studio in Garibaldi and it was taped to the side of a display refrigerator I had purchased; my dream was that it would hold scratch made foods made with local ingredients. That was the year we started crab fishing on the dory boat my partner built. That was the year we worked with a friend helping make and serve local rockfish tacos at Manzanita Farmers market to support his fish company too. That was several years AFTER starting and operating two restaurants in eastern Oregon (Hermiston and Echo), which also started as a farmers market booth.

I've worked on both sides of the kitchen and now, I work the nearshore waters of Oregon, harvesting dungeness crab, wild shellfish, and unique coastal ingredients such as sea beans, purslane and wild beach rose.

These ingredients are revered by chefs across the nation. We are lucky to have them in our backyard. We are also lucky we have Oregonians brave enough to do the hard and dangerous work of harvesting these nutrient dense foods in the best and worst weather and water conditions.

People across Oregon are hungry for real food and real community. My customers through the years, both in my restaurants and in my seafare business, have told me so. They have told me this by their words, but also by the way they choose to spend their money and time. They want to invest in local businesses and feed their families and customers healthy local foods.

This work is not easy, and every day it gets more expensive and hard for many reasons including high cost of equipment and infrastructure, increased food processing and harvesting regulations, and a decreasing number of limited entry fishing permits.

Funds to support vital infrastructure for water dependent businesses are extremely valuable and hard to come by, but investments in specialized equipment and infrastructure will help more than just our fishing communities as land and sea producers face many of the same bottlenecks and challenges.

The coast and its treasures belong to all the people of Oregon. My Portland and eastern Oregon friends anticipate trips here. We might live here, but this is their coast too, and its bounty and beauty bring great delight, joy, peace, and healing.

OCVA is helping quiet voices be heard. They are telling our stories in ways that we could not have done ourselves. Over the past few years, OCVA has come to the aid of our coastal food industry in a way no other partner has - the ways they are helping our local producers are unprecedented and our community is exceedingly grateful.

We know there are many significant needs across our state. Our ask is that you consider supporting HB2909. It will provide essential help pave the way to the more resilient future we all hope and believe is possible.

Thank you for your time, and all that you do to support our communities and people.

Sincerely
Kristen Penner