

Submitter: Madeline Tucker

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: House Committee On Agriculture, Land Use, Natural Resources, and
Water

Measure: HB3124

Chair Helm, Vice-chairs Hartman and Owens, and members of the committee:

For the record, my name is Madeline and I work for the Oregon Farmers Market Association (OFMA), supporting farmers markets across the state of Oregon. I am also a small-scale farmer in my first year of operation in Portland, Oregon. I am grateful for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 3124 and especially on the importance of components 4-7 and 4-8.

Components 4-7 and 4-8 provide support to small farmers and the community food system in the face of the ongoing drought and related natural disasters. It is so important that the state prioritizes these community assets when thinking about drought resilience and planning for Oregon's changing water reality. Component 4-7 creates a separate fund for small farmers to gain drought resilience through the Oregon Community Food Systems Network. The OCFSN has proven its ability to run this kind of program and its members are trusted resources for new, small, and diverse farmers that do not traditionally take advantage of ODA programs. This is distinct from the ODA drought relief and resilience fund because:

The OCFSN fund prioritized BIPOC farmers and was only open to small farms with under \$300,000 of revenue

The OCFSN funds are grants, which are more accessible to small farms than the forgivable loans in the ODAP program.

OCFSN is using a network of trusted organizations to reach farmers who do not see themselves in or have good relationships with ODA programs.

OCFSN's application process was less burdensome paperwork wise and involved more one on one attention from the grant administrator, so it was open to more new and first time farmers.

Component 4-8 creates resilience for our community food system sales outlets which will allow them to keep benefiting farmers and feeding communities even in the face of drought related disasters. We need to prioritize our community food systems because:

- Farmers markets are essential businesses and in times of crisis (like the pandemic) when the centralized food system fails they provide safe, reliable access to crucial, nutritionally dense food for our communities.

- Farmers markets have millions of visitors each year and generate an estimated \$60M of sales each year according to OFMA's data.
- Food Hubs and farmers markets can serve as business incubators for small and new farms to help them reach new customers, establish their brand, and grow into reliable sources of local food for their communities.
- Local and community food systems are good for rural economies. Encouraging this type of farming and these outlets supports the farms that, according to a study from OSU, create more jobs per \$1M in sales, put more money directly into the local economy, and generate more economic activity for other local businesses than commodity farms.

I care about HB 3124 because

- The food hub I work with has been impacted by drought and has left farms without enough supply to come to market
- As a small farmer and new business owner, I rely on a resilient food system and robust community food outlets to survive

It is a good investment to prioritize community food systems and make Oregon more resilient. Please support HB 3124 and prioritize components 4-7 and 4-8.

Sincerely,

Madeline