

Submitter: Meredith Bell
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

I am writing to express my support of HB 2979, which provides funding for Oregon's Farmer and Rancher Disaster Resilience Grants as well as similar funding for Food Hubs and Farmers Markets.

The Farmer & Rancher Disaster Resilience Grants are supporting Oregon's small and underserved producers to be more resilient to fire and extreme weather events – funding things like shade cloth, trailers for evacuation, and irrigation efficiency. This funding is a great alternative to traditional disaster relief funding, as it has given farmers the resources to maintain their crops and livestock through disasters, rather than being compensated by the State after they lose them. This is a strategic and responsible use of state funding.

As a grape farmer who lost crops in the wildfires in 2020 and then again with the spring frosts in 2022, I understand the necessity of support for small farmers in an unstable climate.

HB 2979 passed unanimously out of the House Committee on Ag, Land Use, Natural Resources, and Water with over 200 submissions of written testimony in support, including a letter signed by 248 farms, food hubs, farmers markets, community organizations and others.

Continuity of this funding is critical! This biennium, \$7 million dollars were requested for the Disaster Resilience grants with only \$2.5 million available. As you can see, the need far exceeds available funding.

I urge you to fund HB 2979. Thank you.