

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

Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Olivia Haeberle and my husband, Joe Haeberle and I run Y Knot Farm and Ranch in Roseburg, Oregon. I am here to urge your support of HB 2979, which provides funding for Oregon's farmers, ranchers, food hubs, and farmers markets.

Oregon's small farms and ranches, and the outlets where they market their products, are increasingly threatened by extreme weather events and wildfires. Supporting the Food Systems Resilience Programs in HB 2979 means investing in climate resilience, disaster preparedness, conservation and stewardship, rural economic development, and thriving small businesses all over our state. These investments benefit not just farmers and local food outlets but entire communities by fostering access to healthy, local food, creating hubs for community engagement and expanding nutrition incentive programs.

Last year, we were awarded a disaster resilience grant from OCFSN, and we were able to witness its impact in real time when a flood raged through Douglas County. The field where we ran our pastured chicken operation, made possible with infrastructure from the grant to improve our soil's health, nutrient density, and absorbency, surpassed all of the fields around it in terms of absorbing the flood waters. Our irrigation equipment was also safe underground because of the grant as well. We didn't need to evacuate any of our animals because our field absorbed the water, whereas other neighbors were not so lucky.

Climate change and natural disasters are just inherent with farming in this day and age. The better we can prepare for it, the better off our community is. We aim to keep feeding people for as long as humanly possible, and being prepared makes all the difference.

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! When funding is available one year and not the next, interest in these programs decreases, and it becomes difficult for farmers and community organizations to anticipate what will be available and take best advantage of it.

I urge you to fund HB 2979. Thank you.

Olivia Haeberle
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