

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

Dear Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Amanda Cross, and I work with farmers markets across the state in my role as Programs Manager for the Oregon Farmers Markets Association. I am writing to express my strong support for HB 2979, which provides critical funding for Oregon's farmers, ranchers, food hubs, and farmers markets.

Farmers markets across Oregon are increasingly affected by climate-related disruptions—including extreme heat, wildfire smoke, high winds, and ice storms. Markets have faced frequent early closures, full-day cancellations, and even month-long shutdowns due to unsafe conditions. These disruptions strain staff, reduce income for vendors, and threaten long-term viability.

Market managers are forced to make tough decisions about safety and finances, often with limited staff and resources. HB 2979 supports user-friendly, accessible grants that these dedicated market managers can realistically implement. Demand for these grants far exceeds current funding capacity, with requests totaling more than twice the amount available.

Funds are helping cover fair wages and benefits for market managers and staff, who are critical to running safe, adaptable markets during emergencies. Markets are investing in infrastructure like tents, misters, shade cloth, and communication tools to protect vendors and customers during extreme heat, smoke, or wind. Climate emergency funds are being created to cover lost vendor income and stall fees during closures or unsafe conditions, ensuring farmers don't bear the full financial burden of disruptions. Capacity-building efforts include hiring additional staff, developing emergency response plans, and creating vendor training resources to better prepare for future climate events.

It's essential to continue the earlier legislation that established these grant programs. This stability is crucial for building capacity, allowing markets to implement mitigation measures before disasters strike and respond swiftly and effectively in emergencies. Supporting HB 2979 is an investment in our local food system: these programs bolster local economies, create community gathering spaces, and ensure nutritious food is within reach and affordable for all Oregonians.

Thank you,  
Amanda Cross