



March 19, 2025

HB 3556

Dear Chair Tran, Vice Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Lewis, and members of the House Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans.

As the Executive Director of the High Desert Food and Farm Alliance, I thank you for the opportunity to express my opposition to HB 3556.

The High Desert Food and Farm Alliance was founded on the belief that everyone deserves good food. We service that belief every day through programs designed to strengthen our regional food system in ways that have positive impacts on the environment, the economy, and the communities we serve. Farming and ranching in Central Oregon is a challenge, with limited irrigation and the threat of frost nearly any day in the year. Agritourism enhances and diversifies farmers and ranchers' income streams and brings additional income to our local economy.

HDFFA produces the High Desert Food Trail, providing visitors with a road map to Taste Central Oregon. Promotion of the Food Trail helps bring essential dollars to these businesses, helping them to flourish.

In 2017, HDFFA worked with Oregon State University and Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council to report on the Economic Impact of Local Food Producers in Central Oregon. The study found that unlike imported foods, which retain \$0.28 for every dollar spent, 76 percent of sales by local producers stayed in the local economy. This means that the money spent by producers on their supplies, such as seeds and gas, created an additional 11 jobs and \$1.1 million in additional sales throughout the region's economy. Local food producers create more jobs on farms and in the rest of the economy as compared to commodity focused producers: 26 jobs for every \$1 million in sales compared to 12 jobs among commodity focused producers.

When determining the multiplier effect, which is the ripple effect of spending money in the economy, local farmers were determined to be 1.74, compared to 1.38 for non-local farmers. This means that local farmers support an additional \$0.36 of sales throughout the broader Central Oregon economy for every dollar of local produce sold. Comparatively, local ranchers have a sales multiplier of 1.79 as compared to 1.66 for non-local, and support an additional \$0.13 compared for every dollar of sales.

Having established the importance local food producers have in the health and vitality of our economy, we see how critical it is to support our local producers, so they can not just survive, but their businesses can thrive. Tourism is a key to making that happen.

Please oppose HB 3556.

Thank you for the privilege to submit this testimony for your consideration.

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