



January 19, 2011

Multnomah County Board of Commissioners
c/o The James Beard Public Market
P.O. Box 511
Portland, OR 97207

Dear Commission Members:

This letter of support from Mercy Corps Northwest for The James Beard Public Market acknowledges that we extend both our enthusiastic support for market and our interest in collaborating with the entrepreneurial community of vendors in the market. The market would be a boost to our low-income food and farming clients, a sector we have seen grow significantly in numbers and success in the past six years. The potential location at the Morrison Bridge offers the proximate benefit to staff and visitors to our world headquarters in Old Town Chinatown. More importantly, it offers a visible sales and marketing avenue for our clients. The market would augment the innovation we have seen catalyze in the food and farming sector in Portland and the region.

We work now with well over a thousand low-income entrepreneurs a year in Multnomah County including many minority groups including, since 2004, refugee and immigrant farmers. We now work with small farmers from Cuba, Nepal, Bhutan, Laos, Tajikistan, Russia, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Cambodia and the Ukraine. They produce organic vegetables, flowers and honey. Other small business clients produce, to list a few, artisan goat cheese, salsa, barbeque sauce and tortillas. All of these clients would embrace and benefit from this robust, year-round, well-located public market.

Mercy Corps Northwest's mission is to assist low-income individuals build and sustain businesses in Oregon and Washington. Our focus is in the Portland-Vancouver metro region. We help people build their income, assets and independence. We embrace the opportunity to support and build a working relationship with the James Beard Public Market.

Sincerely,

John W. Haines
Executive Director
Mercy Corps Northwest
43 SW Naito Parkway
Portland, OR 97204