



House Committee on Agriculture and Land Use
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Feb 26, 2019

Chair Clem and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network, I am writing to express *our strong support for HB 2579 and the -2 Amendments*, and to request your support for the bill.

The Oregon Farm to School and School Garden Network's mission is to improve the health and well-being of youth, families, farms, and the environment by supporting members of Oregon's farm to school and school garden community in their work to incorporate healthy, local food into school meals and implement food and garden-based education. Our Network is made up of over 1200 participants including representatives from over 500 businesses, organizations and agencies including school districts, food producers, non-profit organizations, public agencies, and other stakeholders involved with farm to school and school garden programs in Oregon.

Oregon's Farm to School program was created in 2007 and is a model for the country. Farm to school *connects students and their families with healthy local food* by changing food purchasing and education practices as schools, connecting kids with Oregon agriculture, bridging the rural-urban divide, and supporting Oregon's farmers!

Since 2011 the Legislature has provided \$10.4 million in funding for grants administered by Oregon Department of Education, to reimburse K-12 schools for their purchases of Oregon-grown and Oregon-processed foods and for farm and garden-based educational activities. Last school year, with an investment of **\$1.6 million** by the legislature, Oregon schools leveraged federal funds to purchase **Oregon foods valued at \$14 million**, including \$1.3 million of fresh Oregon-grown fruits and vegetables, **reaching 240,000 students!**

HB 2579, would provide funding, in the form of grants administered by Oregon Department of Education, to reimburse school districts for their purchases of Oregon grown and processed foods and for farm- and garden-based education.

The Farm to School Bill passed in 2017 (HB 2038) provided \$4.5 million in funding for the Program. HB 2579 requests an additional \$4 million for a total of \$8.5 million, which would provide much needed additional funding for the current grants, as well as new funding for summer meals, early childcare and education (preschool), technical assistance, Grant program evaluation and support for producers interested in selling to schools. Summer meals in particular provide a valuable opportunity for producers to participate in the program when Oregon's produce is freshest and most abundant!

The -2 Amendments would make the following additional changes to the Bill:

- 1) Including costs to source and process Oregon foods as an allowable expense under the Procurement Grants
- 2) Allowing partner organizations (in addition to ODA and OSU/HEC) to charge administrative costs when contracting with ODE
- 3) Including producers as eligible entities for the Education Grants

Farm to School is a Win! Win! Win!

Farmers win: Farm to school can serve as a significant financial opportunity for Oregon's farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors and food manufacturers by opening the doors to new markets.

Kids win: Farm to school provides all kids access to nutritious, high quality, local food so they are ready to learn and grow. Farm to school activities enhance classroom education through hands-on learning related to food, health, agriculture and nutrition.

Communities win: Farm to school benefits everyone from students, teachers and administrators to parents and farmers, providing opportunities to build family and community engagement. Buying from local producers and processors creates new jobs and strengthens Oregon's economy.

I've attached a two page document about the benefits and impact of HB 2579 as well as a summary of the changes to the Farm to School Grant Program included in the Bill.

Please join us in supporting this very important legislation.
Sincerely,



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HB 2579 Vote 'Yes' for Farm to School and School Gardens!



Last school year, with an investment of **\$1.6 million** by the legislature, Oregon schools purchased Oregon foods valued at **\$14 million**, including **\$1.3 million** of fresh fruits and vegetables, reaching **240,000 students**. **We could be doing so much more.**

What does HB 2579 do?

Oregon's nationally-recognized Farm to School Grant Program (funded by HB 2038 in 2017) provides funding for:

1. school districts to buy and serve Oregon foods, and
2. districts and partner organizations to educate children about food, gardens, and agriculture.

HB 2579 requests the renewal of \$4.5 million and an additional \$4 million for a total of **\$8.5 million** to:

- Provide \$7.2 million for schools to buy more food from more Oregon farmers, ranchers and processors
- Expand service to ~70 early care and pre-K sites, and 184 summer meal programs, to reach our youngest, most vulnerable eaters
- Help Oregon producers meet school requirements, including by developing infrastructure, acquiring equipment, or providing technical assistance

Farm + School = Win! Win! Win!

Farmers win: Last school year, this program helped put \$14 million dollars into the pockets of Oregon producers and their distributors. Schools represent a significant market opportunity for producers, with huge potential impacts for rural livelihoods.

Kids win: Kids can't learn when they're hungry. Farm to School is a proven strategy for providing reliable food access, and increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables in school meals and at home. Tastings and gardening activities enhance classroom curricula through hands-on learning in food, agriculture, health, and nutrition.

Communities win: Food is a connector. Farm to School benefits students, teachers, administrators, parents and producers, providing opportunities to build family and community engagement. Buying from local producers and processors creates new jobs and relationships, strengthening Oregon's economy and culture.

From the Willamette Valley to Curry County, farms, schools and kids are benefiting from Farm to School and School Garden Grants.

Salem-Keizer plants the seeds of science

Through their school gardens, the Salem-Keizer Education Foundation has been able to bring students, families, and educators together. The gardens have become a center of STEM learning for students as well as community education through the Urban AgFest— a celebration that reaches more than 1,000 students and their families.

Bend-La Pine schools go “whole-hog”

Through the support of Oregon’s farm to school grant dollars, the Bend-La Pine school district was able to partner with the FFA to bring the experience of rearing, butchering, and preparing whole animals to students. Two of the individuals who have graduated from this program went on to work at local butcheries.

A new market for Hermiston watermelons

Sam Pollock and Sons have found a customer-base for late-season watermelons that he might not otherwise sell. While grocery store sales peter out

at the end of summer, melon season goes through September, when schools are in session and looking for healthy fruits to bring to their cafeterias. In 2016, the Pollocks sold \$3,842 worth of fruit to schools with active farm to school programs.

Port Orford fish lands in school cafeterias

When Port Orford Sustainable Seafood needed a customer for some surplus catch, they called Rogue Valley Farm to School. Within an hour of the request, and through the support of Oregon farm to school grant dollars, the organization was able to supply Oregon-caught seafood to schools in south-central Oregon.

Reviving agricultural education in Condon

Despite being an agricultural region, agricultural education in Condon has been a victim of budget cuts. When the East John Day Watershed Council received a grant to revive K-12 agricultural education, the kids and the whole community rejoiced, and pulled together for a greenhouse-raising. The Watershed Council partnered with the school district and local farms, ranches, and businesses to educate kids and the community about local agriculture.

Over half of Oregon kids rely on schools for healthy meals.

For many of Oregon’s most vulnerable children, school meals are the healthiest and most reliable they receive. Introducing kids to local, delicious vegetables through garden and cafeteria programs has a profound impact on their diets now and for the future. An increase in funding would expand the program to include summer meals and pre-k students, creating consistent access to fresh, nutritious, delicious local foods for young people across our state and throughout the year.

Oregon’s Farm to School Grant Program has many benefits, including:

- Creating market opportunities for Oregon’s farmers, fishers, ranchers and food processors
- Increasing children’s consumption of fruits and vegetables and shaping life-long healthy eating habits
- Bridging urban-rural divides, and bringing Oregon’s coastline inland

Every dollar we spend on Farm to School and School Gardens makes a difference to Oregon kids who deserve a steady diet of healthy, local food, and to Oregon’s agricultural community who depend on strong domestic markets to grow their businesses.

→ For every \$1 schools spend on local food, \$2 are returned to Oregon’s economy.

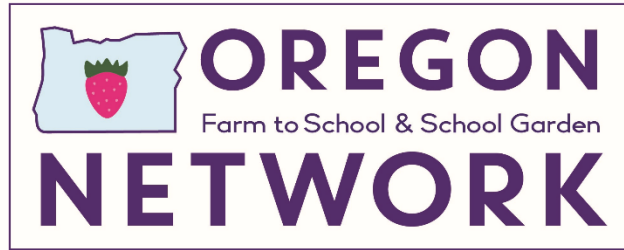


To learn more, contact:

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Summary of changes to the 2019 Oregon Farm to School Bill

HB 2038 (passed in 2017) provided \$4.5 Million in funding for the 17-19 biennium for:

- 1) Procurement Grants: Non-competitive grants to reimburse K-12 districts for their purchases of Oregon-grown and Oregon-processed products. By rule, fluid milk ½ pints, certain bakery products, and minimally processed products grown in other states are not reimbursable. By rule, funds may be used for costs associated with sourcing and processing Oregon products, and administrative costs incurred by districts.
- 2) Education Grants: Competitive grants to school districts and other eligible partner organizations to fund food-, farm- and garden-based education activities.
- 3) Administrative costs incurred by ODE (limited to 2% of \$4.5 Million)

About 80% of Grant funds were distributed as Procurement Grants and about 20% of Grant funds were distributed as Education grants.

Changes included in HB 2579

- 1) Add early childcare and education (Pre-school) settings as eligible entities for Education and Procurement Grants (\$85,000).
- 2) Add summer meal sponsors (Summer Food Service Program) that are not school districts as eligible entities for the Procurement Grants (\$15,000)
- 3) Include summer meals (provided through Summer Food Service Program) in the calculation of grant awards for Procurement Grantees (\$50,000)
- 4) Additional funding for Education Grants (\$400,000)
- 5) Allow Procurement grantees and/or their community partners to use grant funds for education or promotion related to procurement efforts (\$200,000)
- 6) Add competitive Procurement Grants to sustain and incentivize successful farm to school efforts including purchasing and promotion (\$2,000,000)
- 7) Funding for school districts not currently participating in Procurement Grants (\$40,000)
- 8) Funding for state-wide, regional and community partners to provide technical assistance and resources to current and potential grantees, producers and others (\$175,000)
- 9) State-wide capacity building of schools, farmers, producers and community partners for implementation of Oregon Farm to School, provided by OSU. (\$300,000)

- 10) Evaluation of the grant program including economic impact, educational outcomes, health outcomes and grant administration by ODE and partners such as OSU. (\$75,000)
- 11) Funding to train Oregon food product developers and manufacturers on how to get products approved for the school marketplace (to ODA) (\$30,000)
- 12) Infrastructure and equipment funding for producers who intend to sell to schools (such as coolbots, cold storage, refrigerated trucks, on-farm equipment, etc) (to ODA) (\$500,000)
- 13) Funding to incentivize surpluses of Oregon foods to be sold to schools at a reduced cost (to ODA) (\$20,000)
- 14) *2% of \$3,890,000 above admin costs for ODE (\$77,800)*
- 15) In order to allow more than 20% planning time for activities in the education grants, add “coordination and implementation” of food, farm and garden based educational activities to bill language.
- 16) Cleaned up “shall not supplant” language to avoid unclear language in HB 2038.

Dollar amounts for each area of expansion above are not specified in the bill, but will be included in a budget note.

Additional funding needed for areas above: **\$3,967,800**