

Education Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

June 1, 2019

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of Committee:

I am actively involved with Bridlemile Elementary School's garden committee comprised of parents and several classroom teachers. As a retired elementary classroom teacher and garden education coordinator from CA, I have been volunteering at my grandkids' school, engaging with ten K-3 classes in garden/food curriculum, generally with bi-monthly or even weekly 45-60 minutes sessions.

I am writing on behalf of myself, the Bridlemile garden committee, and the parents, teachers and students who've been enthusiastically engaged in garden/food evolving curriculum, our school's food manager, and site development for our learning gardens. We are all quite excited about the joy and benefit of our garden/food education program, especially this spring with our school learning gardens' salad greens being harvested and served as part of lunch service. Students are now asking for more salad, and telling us that we need to grow more! Our food service director noticed significant increase in consumption of salad during the next school day's lunch service. Yeah! Next week we'll harvest our kale, and are hoping to serve up kale chips.

I'm writing to ask you to support HB 2579 and the most recent Amendments, to expand funding for Oregon's farm to school and school garden programs. This bill expands funding for schools to buy OR foods and farm and garden-based education. From personal experience, I KNOW this bill could have great impact!

Farm to school programs support students, farmers and communities. I am profoundly impacted by the difference I see when schools provide garden and food curriculum—the educational and health benefits, along with the pure joy, are clearly evident. Kids are also learning about sustainability and caring for our natural resources, while also experiencing more outdoor education.

Our educators, their students, urban and rural families, and OR farmers would all clearly benefit from legislative support that fully funds HB2579. I strongly urge you to do all you can to advance and fully fund HB 2579.

Thank you for your considerations, and for your service.

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