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30 May 2019

Co-Chairs Senator Betsy Johnson, Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward,
and Representative Dan Rayfield, and Members of the
Joint Committee On Ways and Means
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 2579, Farm to School

Dear Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, and Rayfield, and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2579. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that has worked with Oregonians for more than 40 years to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choices.

We created our Food Systems Program in 2015 to expand our work with partner organizations throughout the state who are working together to build and strengthen robust and healthy food systems across Oregon. The Farm to School Program and HB 2579 are strongly supported by many of those partners because they simultaneously address multiple issues within those food systems.

Providing funding for Farm to School is one of those rare opportunities to get multiple wins with one move: it not only supports Oregon's children, but also our farmers and our communities. The main thrust of this bill is to provide healthy and nutritious food to Oregon's school children, including early childcare and education and summer lunch. The fact that this food will be purchased from Oregon-based farms, who will then recirculate those proceeds in their own communities, is a bonus in the form of a boost to our agricultural economy. The educational components, from teaching kids where their food comes from to how to prepare fresh healthy foods, will create healthier future citizens and will perhaps inspire some to become farmers.

We urge you to advance and fully fund HB 2579. Thank you for consideration of our comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Holmes".

Greg Holmes
Food Systems Program Director
1000 Friends of Oregon