



Education Subcommittee of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

June 6, 2019

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Oregon Organic Coalition, which represents members of the Organic food trade, including farm workers, farmers, consumers, non-profits, manufacturers, distributors and retailers, who know the high value of providing school-aged children education and hands-on learning about food. I also want to highlight that I am a parent of a child in the 4J school district, and have seen the incredible value that Farm to School programs bring to students, offering education on the importance of eating healthy food and vital knowledge about where food comes from—many modern, urban kids don't realize that food grows in the ground!

I'm writing to ask you to support HB 2579, to expand funding for Oregon's farm to school and school garden programs. HB 2579 expands funding for schools to buy Oregon foods and for farm- and garden-based education.

Farm to school programs support students, farmers and communities. I have seen these programs make a difference in growing Oregon's food economy, by providing both education about, and access to, healthy food, and by building community engagement that bridges the urban-rural divide. Children who have the opportunity to be a part of growing and tasting new, healthy, locally-grown and produced foods are more likely to choose to eat these foods on their own. With a health crisis, starting in childhood with a growing rate of obesity, we have a responsibility to supporting and educating students about how to eat healthier. Oregon has an incredible bounty of food grown by our own farmers and manufactured in the state. By expanding the funding available to schools for purchasing Oregon products, we can encourage and incentivize schools to work with local farmers and producers, which fuels a better economy. Truly, a win-win for Oregon.

Please do all you can to advance and fully fund HB 2579.

Thank you for the consideration and for your service.

Stacy Kraker

President, Oregon Organic Coalition, a statewide non-profit

The Oregon Organic Coalition (OOC) is a trade support organization, working to advance the development and growth of the organic industry and community in Oregon. The OOC represents volunteer stakeholders--farmers, wholesalers, processors, organic certifiers, scientists, consumers and retailers. We lead promotional activities and advocate for state policy to support and grow Oregon's organic trade.

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Advancing the development and growth of the organic industry and community
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