

Tri-Chairs Johnson, Steiner-Hayward and Rayfield and members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Jennie Marable and I am testifying on behalf of Grow Portland, to ask you to restore funding for the Oregon Farm to School Grant Program.

Farm to School Grants provide funding for schools to purchase healthy, local foods and provide farm and garden based education. These grants are leveraging and keeping millions of federal dollars in Oregon, supporting local farmers and connecting kids to Oregon agriculture.

This program has directly benefited elementary-aged students in Portland Public and David Douglas School District by providing funding for school day garden programming--in 2021 Grow Portland engaged over 4200 kids in 156 classrooms. The grant provided students and teachers with monthly farm and garden-related distance learning activities during school closures, kept kids directly connected to their schools through virtual garden field trips, and supported the cultivation of 1, 500 sq ft of garden beds, where we grew over 3500 pounds of produce--all of which was donated back to school meal distribution programs and school-based food pantries. Additionally, when students and teachers returned to schools, they had a safe, welcoming and beautiful outdoor space waiting for them, a place to begin healing the wounds of this past year, and a place to witness and draw hope from spring's new beginning. This month our students released butterflies that they raised in gardens that grow thanks to this funding!

Please do all you can to restore funding for the Oregon Farm to School Grant Program to the levels of the last biennium, which was \$15 million. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.