

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

My name is Erin Maidlow and I am testifying on behalf of Umpqua Valley Farm to School, 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 Douglas County by providing funding for four schools and organizations to provide hands-on, garden and agriculture-based education, as well as eight school districts to provide fresh, local produce to students through the procurement funds. The grant benefitted over 5000 students by providing farm fresh produce, education on our local food system, seeds and supplies to learn how to garden at home throughout COVID-19, and countless other activities. The Farm to School program placed thousands of dollars into the hands of local farmers by purchasing produce directly from them to send to schools and families. We provided a Youth CSA program to families in rural communities where grocery stores and access to fresh produce is not easy to come by. The funds also allowed me to support 18 other school garden programs throughout the county through the Hub Lead role I represent.

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. Thanks for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Erin Maidlow

Umpqua Valley Farm to School