

Testimony of Robert L Middleton on behalf of Farm to School bill 5014

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

3/15/2023

Co-Chairs Senator Frederick and Representative McLain and members of the
Committee

My name is Robert L Middleton, currently residing in The Dalles, Oregon as a STEM educator for OSU Extension 4H in Wasco County.

My position originally was funded in 2020 from The Farm to School Grant. In the 2 ½ years since my position was funded we have been able to impact over 1,500 unique students in Wasco County. We were also able to conduct agriculture and Garden Science classes via zoom during Covid by incorporating Master Gardeners skills in producing kits that was taught virtually. There were over 2500 kits distributed and used including kits that demonstrated seed and plant growth.

Now my position is funded by Wasco County as part of our STEM education through OSU Extension. We are able to conduct in-person farm and garden science lessons as well as assist in School Gardens after-school clubs that currently impact over 100 students in Wasco County. In my experience, this program has been able to help students understand where their food comes from and how their food system works. This will be vital in the future of the food system of our world, our nation, and our state.

I believe this bill has the potential to increase knowledge of local and farms, garden science, but also general science understanding by Oregon students. I believe that not only should the funding be sustained at 10.2 million dollars but expanded if possible. Thank you for your consideration,

Robert L Middleton
STEM Educator
Oregon State University Extension, Wasco County

