

Submitter: Domenika Radonich

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural
Resources

Measure: HB5002

Co-Chairs and members of the Committee, my name is Domenika Radonich and I work at Good Rain Farm located in Gresham, Oregon.

I am testifying today in support of including the Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure Grant Program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget. This Grant program provides funding for food producers to access necessary equipment to meet the demands of the school marketplace and addresses barriers that small producers like us face when selling to schools.

Our farm grows over 125 varieties of vegetables, fruits, and edible flowers that feature Native First Foods of this region, and of Turtle Island more broadly. We serve local schools, food banks and institutions with the belief that through connection to a place we can rebuild a culture of respect, honor, gratitude and reciprocity.

We received this grant funding in 2022 to fabricate custom farm infrastructure such as a mobile curing shed and a mobile wash&pack station, which are vital to our ability to expand our wholesale offerings to schools and early care centers in a meaningful way, while staying light on our feet as tenant farmers. Ours is a common reality for small peri-urban farmers; we rent the land we farm, and we need equipment we can take with us in case we move. We also face worsening climate change disasters each year that require more frequent evacuations. This is why our mobile infrastructure grant funding was so important to our farm's relationships with school districts such as PPS, Centennial, St. Helens, Eugene, La Grande, and early care education centers such as Metro Family Service, League of Urban Latin American Citizens, and the Native American Youth and Family Center, to name a few. We expect to increase our capacity to these youth nutrition services by 200% in 2023 thanks to this grant program.

I ask that you support this grant program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget at \$500,000 to ensure small Indigenous-owned farms like ours can engage in this valuable program and serve more kids in our region with foods that honor the heritage and peoples of Oregon. Thank you for your time.

Domenika Radonich
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Accounts Manager
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