

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

3/15/23

Co-Chairs Senator Dembrow and Representative Pham and members of the Committee

I am writing on behalf of Ella Bella Farm, in support of the request to include 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.

We are a small organic farm located in Southern Oregon. We grow a variety of vegetables and melons. We received a grant in 2021 to put in a well in order have access to clean water on the farm. In order to sell our produce to most schools in our area we needed Food Safety certification. The ability to access clean water on the farm made the certification process much easier. Unfortunately, the drought in our area had a devastating impact on our farm the past few years and we were unable to grow our crops. We are planning on growing food for the schools and our other vendors this year and completing the food safety certification required, thanks to the safe water that is now available on our farm.

We support this grant program because it helps small farms to build the infrastructure needed to provide food for the schools, and it impacts the community by keeping small farms alive in an increasingly challenging environment.

I ask that you support including this grant program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget at \$500,000 as previously requested in ODA's Agency Request Budget. Thank you for your time.

Michelle Ross
Ella Bella Farm, LLC
Talent, OR