



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

March 21, 2023

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

I am writing on behalf of the Sustainable Living Center's Farm to School program, a recipient of the Oregon Farm to School Grant Program in Oregon Department of Education's budget. We are grateful this grant serves eastern Oregon with critical funding for schools and early childhood education programs! With these funds we purchase Oregon foods, provide hands-on farm and garden education, provide technical assistance, and support new equipment and infrastructure for food producers and processors. It is critical for the farm to school communities that you sustain the current level of \$10.2 million dollars for continuity! This is the only way to deepen and recreate dependable business relationships between schools and food producers, and to maintain growing edge educational programs connecting students to their food, agriculture and nutrition (as was once a tradition in our schools).

As an educator, F2S technical assistance provider and stakeholder support organization, I/we support this grant program because:

- It grows long-term skills for wellness and health in kids and communities
- It grows a stronger local food system and supports our local, often rural economies
- Supports schools as hubs for community learning and sustenance, especially during times of crisis such as wildfires and pandemic, when food security is critical

I ask that you support the inclusion of this grant program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at the current level of \$10.2 million, so they may continue their commitment to healthy kids, schools and communities. Thank you for your inclinations in this direction!

Sincerely,

Karen Wagner
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Garden Educator and
East-Central Oregon Farm to School/School Gardens Hub Lead
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The Mission of the Walla
Walla Valley Farm to
School Program is to
inspire healthy
communities through
food, farm and garden
experience.

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