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

Date 3/21/2023

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

Thank you all for taking the time to make the Farm to School Grant Program in House Bill 5014 a priority!

I am writing on behalf of **Growing Gardens** in support of the Farm to School Grant Program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget. This Grant program provides critical funding for schools and early childhood education programs to purchase Oregon foods, hands-on farm and garden education programs, equipment and infrastructure for food producers and technical assistance for the farm to school community. Sustaining the current level of \$10.2 million dollars will support dependable business relationships between schools and food producers and maintain consistent educational programs that connect students to agriculture and nutrition

At **Growing Gardens**, an Oregon nonprofit with over 27 years of experience, we work across the state of Oregon to ensure that children, families and individuals who are currently incarcerated have access to healthy, culturally nourishing foods and hands-on garden education. We are building the next generation of food system leaders right now! **Growing Gardens is in full support of House Bill 5014.**

As an organization with more than two decades of direct experience, we support this grant program because it builds a stronger more connected community through food, education, and hands-on learning while supporting local small-scale farmers. This is a direct support to the entirety of our food system.

We ask that you support including this grant program in the Oregon Department of Education's budget at the current level of \$10.2 million so this program can continue to support healthy kids, schools and communities. Thank you for your time, your leadership and your bold support!

Sincerely,

Jason Skipton
Executive Director
[Growing Gardens](http://www.growing-gardens.org)