

Submitter: David Tourzan

On Behalf Of: Rogue Valley Farm to School

Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Measure: HB5014

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

3/21/23

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

I am writing on behalf of public school teachers, parents, and as a board member of Rogue Valley Farm to School 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

As an public school teacher, parent, and non-profit board member I support this grant program because I have seen the first hand impact that Farm to School funding provides.

Most of our students have never cooked a meal, harvested fresh food, or served a meal that's not from a microwave on paper plates. I have seen children's eyes light up the first time they try a fresh tomato, cook for their classmates, or have local food in their cafeteria.

The impacts of this funding are vital to non-profits, public schools, and especially kids eating healthy foods which help their academic achievement, social skills, physical health, and mental health.

These are all things money cannot buy, but your funding can help make something that is not easily profitable to profit the neediest of our children directly in their mouths and bellies. From education, to procurement, to actual harvest meal and tasting tables, none of this is possible without state funding, which also shows Oregon's commitment to a healthy future. We can be a model for the rest of the country and world if we continue to fund the most essential programs for the underserved children

of Oregon.

I 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.

David Tourzan

Teacher - Ashland School District

Board Member - Rogue Valley Farm to School